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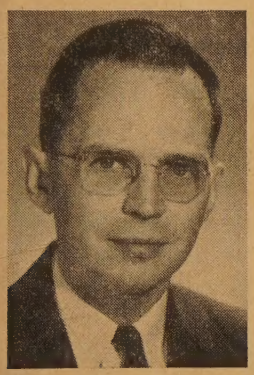
# The Pulpit

*A Journal of Contemporary Preaching*



## *Roger L. Shinn:*

## Saying Good-By to God

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| *Nels F. S. Ferré* | • | God's New Age |
| *Wilbur H. Tyte* | • | Work |
| *Hunter Beckelhymer* | • | Thoughts on Leisure |
| *Roger A. Cowan* | • | General and Specific |
| *John J. Bunting, Jr.* | • | Return to Religion |
| *Harry Hutchison* | • | Caricatures of the Gospel |

*DAVID ESLER* • *THE PREACHING MINISTRY*

L. XXIX, No. 9 SEPTEMBER 1958

The Pulpit

Published monthly by the Christian Century Foundation, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5, Ill. Founded 1929 by Charles Clayton Morrison as a journal of contemporary preaching.

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35 cents single issue.
$4 a year in U.S.A.
$4.10 in Canada. $4.35 foreign.

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# PULPIT POST

**Enthusiasm—Out and Out**

SIR: What a feast! I am referring, of course, to the August Pulpit, and in particular to "A Telexperiment," "Colonialism and Christian Art" and "The Christ of Tin Pan Alley." Not only was this a delectable full course, but served up by chefs who know their business.

I came away from those articles with the same emancipated lift I get when leaving the theater after a good play, or a concert, or—to labor the metaphor—from one of San Francisco's choicer restaurants. What I mean to say is that I had intimate transaction with something immediate, downright real and overflowing with relevant meanings for our age. Sometimes I get so weary with religionists compulsively feeding off their own depleted reserves, verbalizing in such rut-worn parochialisms, while ignoring, by ignorance or pride, the wealth of contemporary content of the culture lying beyond the picket of the church.

These pieces not only had blood in their veins, but they spoke to some of the basic dimensions of our common life, searching below the obvious surface, undercutting the pat formula, the familiar homiletical party line. Portrait of God," in particular, I thi answers vividly, in imaginative expe mentalism, the authentic objections a Paul Tillich who constantly remin the church that it must "rediscover t basic questions to which the Christi symbols are the answers in a w which is understandable to our time

GILBERT H. VIEIRA
Methodist Minister
Jackson, California

**Enthusiasm—Qualified**

SIR: The sermon of Arthur V Mielke, "Hiroshima: Our Guilt a Our Atonement" in the August iss is good in all ways. There is gui there is infinitesimal atonement.

What the author does not say is th the American obliteration bombing the German city, Dresden (Februa 13-14, 1945), exceeded in horror mass-murder and destruction, by fa the damage of Hiroshima. Some tw thousand planes did there, in greate measure, what the first atomic bom achieved at Hiroshima.

The second thing by-passed by th

*(Continued on page 30)*

# The Pulpit

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VOLUME XXIX | SEPTEMBER 1958 | No. 9

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## Memo:

RECENT events in the Middle East keep whipping my mind back to incidents in a brief visit to Syria not too long ago. It is hard to think of anything else in the week in which I write. Besides, the editors of *Concern* have asked me to write something for them based on those recollections. So while I'm stirred up, let me say to my preaching friends some of what has been prompted by the questioning Methodists' questions.

Somehow, since my afternoon in Damascus two years have flashed across the tiny cleared space we always call the present. Nothing that has happened in that time has changed my mind about what I saw at the International Fair on a hot day in Syria. I guessed then I was meeting real nationalism on the hoof, and the sequel has shown that it was even then at full gallop.

The nationalism of the new nations in Asia and Africa is nothing like the settled, cool self-consciousness of nations more used to their own identities. The nationalism of the new nations has to be seen to be believed; there is nothing in our easy-at-home consciousness that prepares us for it. In each new nation it is the peoples' renewed and inflamed awareness of themselves as a nation, as a folk, as a people with a particular history, a particular religion, a culture, a civilization, a literature—a people's inflamed self-consciousness, this is the red-hot nationalism of the new nations.

Such nationalism fixes on one particular symbol and fingers one particular foe. In the Middle East now, for instance, Israel is the continuing foe and Nasser is the rhapsodied symbol. Between these positive and negative poles, Arab nationalism stretches its unbearable tensions.

The anti-Zion bitterness is immediately apparent. Even in the most westernized Christian Arab that virulence brims, and spills at every tiny lurch of events. The distant Damascus incident that showed me the other side of things—the fixation on a particular symbol—involved the Fair crowds. Out in front of the pavilion of each Middle Eastern nation exhibiting at the International Fair, out in front of the portrait or statue of each nation's ruler, was a larger picture of Nasser. Humiliating, fulfilling to the rulers? Of course—but already inadequate. Where were the western diplomats who must have visited those pavilions then, yet went on in fatuous assumption that our security lay in working out dark little deals with rulers whose sure eclipse was already thus publicly proclaimed? Where were western information officers every afternoon when, on the steps of the Egyptian pavilion, little rotogravure pictures of Nasser were passed out by the thousands, and tens of thousands of people rioted to get the cheap, precious icons?

The western agents certainly were there, but somehow word didn't get back—or didn't get through—about what they saw. That was new-nation nationalism in the raw. There is nothing rational about it. It isn't what too many of our policy makers have seemed to assume that it is—just a heightened patriotism. This nationalism is a total irrationality. It cheerfully cuts off its nose to spite its face, as we see in Indonesia where nationalists continue to root out even the most cooperative Dutch. Though the Dutch have what the nation needs, the Dutch are the foe by which the nationalism identifies itself, and so must go.

Because fair-minded observers have understood so well how such nationalism could have been generated under colonialism's crust, they have credited the nationalisms with more self-understanding than they have. However logically we can account for them, the new nationalisms are not logical. New-nation nationalism is a flash behind the eyes, a fire in the blood, a burning in the bones. It is not cerebral at all. It is corporeal, visceral, corpuscular. So you do not reason with it; you can only figure it into your own reasoning.

Men, nations, churches more confronted with the phenomenon cannot build policy on *any* apparently rational agreements or accommodations reached with nations where the surge and pulse of local exaltations still regularly inundate all the mind's little dikes. For awhile yet, nations of a cooler nationalism can only seek to contain and even absorb the excesses of the more palpitant nationalisms. The more self-confident nations can and should make clear their sympathies with any nationalism's justifiable plaints and claims.

So we must forebear the new nations—and bear for them what we can. And we must wait, knowing that all historic phases are accelerating in an accelerated history. Meanwhile, having seen nationalism so italicized afar, we may well give some critical attention to our own closer, cannier version, asking all the uncomfortable unasked questions about our own nation's assumptions, affiliations and affirmations.

J. A. G.

*The Relation of Man to God*
*Is the Depth Which Creates the Self*

# Saying Good-By to God

**By Roger L. Shinn**

AMONG the insults commonly passed around in our society is one that says, "You'd forget your head if it weren't fastened to you." Nobody knows exactly what that means, because nobody has actually run the experiment. But we have some other, similar phrases. One that I, as a professor, often hear is "absent-minded." What do those words really mean? If my mind is absent, can I be here? Or is my mind somehow so much a part of me that if it's gone, I'm not present?

Phrases like these show us something of the elusive nature of the human personality. Wise men have often sought to discover more about this personality. The famous philosopher, David Hume, for instance, tried through most of his career to discover the self. He felt that he never succeeded. It may be that he used the wrong method. Somebody has said that he was like a man who goes outside of his house, then looks in through the window and wonders why he doesn't see himself there.

In any case, personality is mysterious and elusive. And to make the problem more difficult, the self is always a changing self. It is a self in motion. It is leaving behind an old self and becoming a new self. This is obvious at any of the major transitions of life.

One such point of change may be going to college. A person says good-by to his friends and heads for a new life. Maybe, in a sense, he also says good-by to himself. Joe College, as he leaves home, says, "Good-by, Joe. I'm going to college."

This sort of change is a strange experience. Back there at home was a somebody clearly related to me here. There is a name like mine, a picture in the high school yearbook, a memory. But that person is somehow a stranger. I do not really know him. This is part of the embarrassment we sometimes feel at seeing the hometown folks. They expected to see this Joe they knew. But here is a different Joe, uncomfortably related to the old one, but very different.

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ROGER L. SHINN, *professor of Christian Ethics at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, is a graduate of Heidelberg College, Tiffin, Ohio, Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University, New York City. An ordained minister of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Dr. Shinn, a well-known author and lecturer, has also taught at Union Theological Seminary and at Heidelberg College.*

Whenever you make any major move, you l some of your self behind. You may move from town to another. You may move intellectu abandoning old, inadequate ideas and taking new, better ones. You may go through the m ment from adolescence to maturity. But in radical move, one of two things happens. Ei you become a partial self, with the rest of the cut off, left behind; or you go through some p ess of death and rebirth.

### Roles, Not Persons

In a world that moves as fast as ours, it is no w der, then, that we find so many partial selves mov around among us. Our campus language recogn this in many ways. We say of so-and-so, "He brain." And in doing that we wrap up a minor c pliment inside a major slam. For whatever ap ciation, even envy, there may be of so-and- mind, we are saying that he is less than a person.

Hollywood has its similar language. Someone there is known as "the body"; someone else as " voice." And, again, we describe something less t a self.

Often we carry this attitude over towards gro of people, particularly people of other races t our own. Fearing to meet whole persons as pers we identify them by some particular set of sup ficial attributes.

In all these cases what we are recognizing is ro not persons. Life, then, becomes largely a matte role meeting role rather than person meeting pers

Many of our human relations illustrate this pr lem. Think, for instance, of rushing. The freshm visit a certain house. Then they come back and nounce, "Oh, they're swell guys, swell guys o there." And the upperclassmen at the same time responding about the freshmen, "These are kind." And all that is being said is what is suppos to be said, what the conventions of the situati dictate. These remarks tell nothing of people; th describe only roles. Thus, we find among ourselv so many abstractions of personalities. We get a quainted, hang around together, date, go to the sa affairs. But do we really know each other?

Last year some of our students wrote and p duced a play. It concerned human relations on t campus—this probing of people trying to come know and understand other people. One of the ch

rs in the play had an unusual line. He said, netimes I feel like going up to a man and smash- him in the face just to find out if he's really e."

mething like that may have been in the mind oren Kierkegaard, that disturbing Dane, who wrote that the reason his soul always turned to the Old Testament and to Shakespeare that those who spoke there were at least hu- beings: they hated, they loved, they mur- d their enemies and cursed their descendants ughout all generations, they sinned.

es, there are some nasty characters in the Old tament and in Shakespeare. But you do not feel walking up to them and throwing your fist into n to see whether they are really there. They are just roles; they are persons.

### An Empty Drawer

low in this process of growing, of saying good-by n old self, we often do something else. We say d-by to God also. People do it in a variety of s. Sometimes it is quite obvious. The famous ologist, William Graham Sumner, explained what pened when he undertook his researches. He put religious beliefs in a drawer, then went on to his olarly activities. Years later, when he opened the wer, it was empty.

Others do the same thing in a less intellectual y, perhaps in a playboy spirit. That is, they de- e that they are done with Sunday school stuff. ey have outgrown the old religion. They want to oy life. They say good-by to God, travel with ir own crowd, and try to be themselves.

More often, perhaps, this saying good-by to God less obvious process. People keep up the religious ivities, participate in church and the student ristian organizations. But there is something pty about it all. They are walking through a role. ey are not persons in a living relation to God.

### Wanting God Back

After this happens, it frequently occurs that peo- want God back again. There seems to be such impulse in our national social life today. It is d up with the anti-communist movement. We e to speak about atheistic communism, and there- e decide that we are a religious democracy. So American Legion launches a "back to God" mpaign. J. Edgar Hoover, of the F.B.I., advises ople that since the Russians are anti-God, we uld train our children to be pro-God. The logic this is a little unconvincing. The Russians, pre- mably, are anti-polio; but that does not convince that I should train my children to be pro-polio. evertheless, these are some clues to this questing irit in our society, this half-hidden yearning to get d back.

The same thing happens in the lives of individual rsons. They sense something missing, something ey have lost. So maybe they read a popular author how to strike up an acquaintance with God. They rk hard at it, learn the formulae, keep out all gative thoughts and develop just positive ones. d after it is all over, they wonder why it is so empty, so superficial. Perhaps about that time they happen on the statement of Arnold Toynbee: "Religion, once lost, . . . can never be whistled for, like a dog, to come back obediently at Man's convenience."

Let us, therefore, look at what it really means, in the experience of a human self, to say good-by to God.

According to one picture it does not mean a great deal. It is simply getting rid of some excess baggage. A few years ago, for example, John Dewey, a man of great personal integrity, announced that all God adds to morality is power and coercion. Since a man of real virtue does not need this threat of coercion, he will be a better man without God than with God.

For other people the process is somewhat sadder than that. They give the impression that they say good-by to God regretfully. They would like to keep acquainted with God, but they do not see how they can in our kind of world. This experience of leaving God behind is something like knocking off the top story of a building. It is unfortunate. The edifice is not so impressive without that top story. But still, there's enough left to make an adequate place to live.

### Eroding the Foundations

But all this has very little to do with the relationship to God which men of faith throughout the ages have found. Martin Luther once said, "What thy heart clings to and relies upon, that is thy God." Now if this is what God means, saying good-by to him is far more serious than removing an unnecessary top story to a building. It is eroding the very foundations of life.

Something of this, too, we get from Jean-Paul Sartre, who describes human life in a universe where God is lost. The words that characterize human life are nausea, frustration—at best a kind of courageous despair, as a man tries to assert himself in the face of emptiness.

We can see this same problem from a different viewpoint if we look at the nature of loyalties. It is silly, of course, to complain that a man who has said good-by to God no longer has any loyalties. Some people who ignore God are fine citizens, decent people in their relations with others. But God makes a difference in the very meaning of loyalties. Apart from God, I pick my loyalties. I choose the goals that please me. I could just as well pick others if I happened to prefer them, if they seemed more appropriate to my whims.

The experience of religious faith is quite different. Here, I am grasped by a power that demands my loyalty. Of course, I must make my choice. But my choice is a response to something prior to me, some reality more basic and more eternal than I. So the Christian faith has always testified that the relation of man to God is so deep a part of the personality that to say good-by to God is to become less than a self.

And what happens when we become less than selves? We come to realize, if we are perceptive

*(Continued on page 15)*

*Through Paradox, Discipline, Mystery*
*The Preacher Is God's Witnessing Man*

# THE PREACHIN

THE preaching ministry is a ministry of witness, and the preacher is God's witnessing man. This does not mean that a man cannot witness unless he preaches. It does mean that he cannot preach unless he witnesses. The New Testament words for preaching have within them a note of confident public utterance. Preaching is heralding, a trumpeting to the world of what God wants the world to hear. It is a crying out of good news, with the urgency and excitement (as Bishop Gerald Kennedy puts it) of a special edition of a newspaper in a great emergency. It implies that compulsiveness of proclamation that should make a man stop in his tracks to listen and feel out of touch with the times if he does not know this timeliest news of all that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."

One hears frequently that the day of the preaching ministry is fading, and that if a service would be worshipful, its worship quality will be in inverse ratio to its preaching content. The more worship, the less preaching; the more preaching, the less worship. The issue is pointed up by comparison of extremes. A well-ordered, carefully articulated, liturgical service, rich in dignified sonorousness, is compared with one that is an ill-defined jumble of scraps of prayer and singing, climaxed with a lengthy, disputatious tirade that is meant to pass for a sermon, and the critic will say, "There! See what I mean. Preaching is only a vulgar intrusion on the quietness of a soul that is seeking for God." The comparison, of course, is grotesque, but it is made in one form or another. Preaching that is a vulgar intrusion is not preaching any more than worship that is mere sensuous dalliance is worship. Preaching itself is worship, as are prayer and praise and the reading of the Scriptures. To degrade preaching or to set it aside is to do violence to the express purpose of God and the chosen method of Jesus. When Jesus came forth on his mission among men, "He came preaching," and when he sent out his disciples, lean-bodied and venturesome, on their first mission, he sent them to preach. Whatever they were to do in works of compassion and heal their first assignment was to preach. And with t the Christian church began its assault upon world.

### Preaching Is Sharing

The preaching ministry is a sharing in the reden tive activity of the Divine Word. It is no less th that; it cannot be any more. Fundamental to preaching is the fact that there is a Divine Word declare, that God has spoken and is speaking, a by speaking has made his will active, intelligib and communicable. It is important to stress word "active," for in the Hebrew tradition to wh our Christian tradition owes so much, the conc tion of God's Word is not that of something sta but dynamic. God does not speak and then act— is already active when he is speaking. The Div Word is also Divine Deed. Therefore when a m enters the pulpit, God is already there. God is n merely speaking through him, he is *acting* throu him, using his personality to touch the personaliti of others, his powers to stir them, his persuasion win them, and his spirit to commune with th spirit. Thus both speaker and listener are broug together into a new awareness of God's presen the finality of his will, the wonder of his glory, t riches of his mercy, and the greatness of his salvati

Seen in that light, and it is the only adequate lig for a true perspective of it, the significance preaching is breath-taking. Those who minimize t preaching ministry, show but scant respect for t church's theology or its history, and are forgetful the rock whence they have been hewn. "Now then says Paul to the Corinthians, "*as though God d beseech you by us*, we pray you, *in Christ's stea* be ye reconciled to God."

Not only is the Divine Word in which we sha the Divine Deed, but it is also redemptive deed. I purpose is deliverance. This is the consistent em phasis of the Bible in both Old and New Test ments. No doubt there were other elements in t Word-Deed of God — judgment, rebuke, comfo compassion, guidance—but these were all "unto r demption." God judged, that through his judgme men might see the futility and destructiveness evil, and be delivered from it. God comforted, th men might learn to throw themselves on the mer

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DAVID ESLER *gave the above address at his inauguration as professor of homiletics at San Francisco Theological Seminary, where he has served as associate professor of practical theology from 1953 to 1957. Born in Belfast, North Ireland, and educated at Queen's University and the Assembly College, Professor Esler was called to the seminary from the Malone Presbyterian Church of Belfast. This address appears here in part.*

# MINISTRY

By David Esler

love whose very compassion was a rebuke, and, first breaking them down, helped to build them God guided, that men in the twisted ways of might see his way and know it to be his, and se it for their own. Always his word was deed, his deed was redemptive. When in the fullness me the word was made flesh in Jesus Christ, at perfect Word and the perfect vehicle of the d, visible, tangible, intelligible, there could be urther doubt in the minds of men. This was he hom the prophets spoke, and for whom the ages ed. He in whom dwelt all the fullness of the God-d bodily, claimed as his specific mission "to seek to save the lost." Christ was both Divine Word Divine Deed, and both were redemptive.

### Heart-Searching Commission

o be called into the sharing of that Divine Word-d is a commitment which can never be under-en lightly, and this is the preacher's calling, this preaching ministry. The preacher analyzes, in-orets, and communicates the Word in so far God gives him insight to do so. That is a rt-searching commission. Small wonder that re should be a remarkable consonance among the phets about their initial unwillingness thus to used. God virtually had to arrest them in the midst their daily tasks. Even after they had accepted commission, a sense of dereliction could still wd in upon them as they compared their powers h their tasks. I know of nothing more stirring in whole human story than the way in which these n held fast to that which drew them from home l kindred, provoked the doubts of friends and the ers of foes, and engaged them in public witness h a hardihood which amazed themselves as they claimed God's Word for their times. Night and y the constraint of the Divine Word was upon m, in them, and mediated through them. It gave m no rest, and filled their conscious hours with abasement that was an exaltation, an enslave-nt that was true freedom, a solitariness that was ellowship, an agony that was joy.

The preaching ministry as the Scriptures portray s not the pastime of the easy-throated orator with flair for words, nor of the brazen rabble rouser o would fain be heard for his much speaking. It a "mysterium tremendum," an awesome mystery, ich even the doughtiest must approach with trembling, and whose achievement is only possible by a continuous self-emptying, that Christ, the Divine Word-Deed, may be all and in all.

This high conception of preaching might seem to make the work of the preacher mechanical. What more need he do than relax and the Divine Word will automatically come through? Such automation, however, makes no appeal to God, who would use his preacher as a witnessing man, not as a debilitated puppet. Thus another outstanding feature of the preaching ministry emerges. The preaching ministry is set within a constant paradox which makes its expression at once fixed and flexible, courageous and compromising, of the world and above the world.

There is, for example, the paradox of the message. It is both revealed and hidden. We do not preach in a vacuum. Before the preacher begins to speak, certain emphases are expected of him. It is as though the details were printed on a placard in front of the pulpit itself or on the wall behind him. He preaches Jesus Christ, Son of Man and Son of God, born, living, loving, dying, rising again, ascended and still alive by His Spirit, ever present and ever powerful, Lord of Life, Lamb of God, Savior, in whom and through whom we know all that we need to know of God, Man, and Destiny. It is for the proclamation of that that the pulpit exists. The preacher has not to think it up for himself. It is there, given, revealed, a matter for announcement.

### Constant Paradox

One might be forgiven for imagining that, this being so, nothing could be easier than preaching. A collection of Scripture texts, gathered at random and given resoundingly like a town crier, or plaintively like a gentle suitor, according to the mood of the moment, might be deemed sufficient to make a sermon. Indeed, to judge by some of the more undisciplined utterances on the radio, one would feel that there are many who think that it is. But it is *not* sufficient, for this revealed truth is cast into words, and words are notoriously fickle as they pass from mouth to mouth, language to language, and generation to generation. While the central facts of the faith remain given, the final interpretation of them is not the exclusive possession of any one person or nation or language or church. It is "hid with Christ in God." Therefore, in the realm of truth the

preacher must always be both finder *and* seeker, adjusted settler *and* intrepid pioneer.

Again, there is paradox in that the message could not be simpler nor at the same time more complicated.

It is true that God in his mysterious providence can convert a criminal by the mere reading of the Scriptures without the medium of any preacher. But such instances are given for our encouragement, not for our indulgence, for a stimulus to further understanding effort, not for excuse to forswear effort altogether. The simple gospel is anything but simple when we try in public utterance to spell out its implications. In fact, it is over-simplification which is one of the preacher's greatest perils and which makes his message suspect by the man of affairs.

We do our task as preachers no honor if our message for the times is based on such a flimsy theory of history. Social, economic, and international affairs today are far beyond the one-cause and one-effect structure, and therefore beyond the one-expedient solution. Our first Christian duty as preachers is the acquisition of knowledge and the endeavor to apply our Christian standards to the *total* realities of a given situation, knowing that the best we can hope for in a complicated society is not finality but growth.

The preaching ministry is set within constant paradox not only in relation to the preacher's message, but also in relation to the preacher himself. The preacher is ordained to his task, but ordination alone will not make him a preacher.

I am sure that there is not one of us who has been ordained to the ministry who can recall any moment more solemn in his life than when the words of ordination were pronounced over him with prayer in the solemn assembly. It was surely a time of supreme emotion, deepest searching, and highest exaltation. If devotional fervor, spiritual uplift, and heavenly rapture alone sufficed for the preaching ministry, what was generated at that moment would surely seem to have been enough to last us for a lifetime. But it was not enough. There were gray days to follow, chilly winds and weary trudgings and a fading away into the blue distance behind us of the mount of our illumination. The paradox was thus thrust searchingly upon us, as upon all in like situation, that no other calling than the preaching ministry begins at so high a level and has to be carried out amid scenes at times so commonplace and in situations that test the soul of a man to the depths.

### Orderliness Not Enough

We learned, too, that paradox was not only in the preacher's position, but also in his preparation. Orderliness there must be—of thought, habit, and study—but orderliness is not enough. It is one thing to know all the several rules of sermon construction, to assess the relative proportions of Introduction, Discussion, and Conclusion; to know at a glance whether a sermon is constructed like a Roman candle or an exploding rather than an expanding telescope, and to be able to force one's words into a stylistic strait jacket according as we wish to exhort or comfort or persuade; but all that, we learned, not necessarily make a sermon. Indeed, we may found instead that we, too, were worthy of prayer once uttered, I am told, by an Indian tor concerning a young minister who had preached elaborately but much too long: "L take a few feathers from the breast of thy yo servant's imagination and pin them to the tai his judgment!"

Even when imagination and judgment w rightly blended, yet if the "Plus of the Holy Spir as Sangster calls it, were lacking, we have lear with desolation that orderliness, while necessary not enough of itself to move men Godwards. W we have seen how frequently God has been plea to use to more visible good effect another ma utterance, unlettered, undisciplined, and flagran defying the codes of style and even the decencie grammar, we may have lost heart a little, and b tempted to flee the pulpit altogether.

### Waiting for a Word

Paradox of message, paradox of preacher, a and paradox of congregation. The Greek philosop Heraclitus once said, "No man ever enters the sa river twice." True, and no preacher ever addres the same congregation twice. Outwardly the peo may be the same and, if a roll call were made, wo answer to the same names. Yet they are not t same. They are older than when the preacher l saw them; maybe wiser, maybe more foolish; may gladder, maybe sadder, more enlightened or m perplexed. They are never the same, save in one f ture. They are waiting for a word from the preach that will speak to their condition. Such a word not easily delivered.

So there it is—this great calling, this awesom mystery which God has entrusted to us, so rich tradition, so full in content, so charged with divi promise, is set within a context of paradox whi cannot be evaded. What are we to do about the ma ter? One thing at least which should prove m helpful: *We can reverse our paradoxes.* That puts new complexion on them that entirely transform their impact. "So the preaching ministry is grea but it is difficult." True, but read it the other wa The preaching ministry is difficult, *but* it is *great*- greater than anything we know—and straightwa a throb comes into our pulses and a light into o eyes as we realize that it is for *this* that God h called us. If there is much that is hidden, we ca always find firm footing on what is revealed; if mu that is complicated, there is that in the gospel whi is simple and will never break no matter how heavi we lean on it. "God so loved the world that he ga his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth him should not perish but have everlasting life Reversing our paradoxes, we challenge our souls t a spiritual heroism which alone can content u knowing that if our calling as preachers must h lived out amid hazards and tribulations, "tribul tion worketh patience, and patience, experience, an experience, hope, and hope maketh not ashame because the love of God is shed abroad in our hear by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us."

*We Keeping God's Answer*
*iting Unheeded at the Door?*

# God's New Age

By Nels F. S. Ferré

ND "Peter continued knocking." The story we all know. Herod had put Peter in prison, the disciples were gathered together to pray Peter. Surely they prayed for his release, his ration as their leader. God did deliver Peter, Peter stood at the door, knocking. God's an- stood at the door, knocking to be let in. Dear da ran down, who for the joy of hearing Peter's didn't open the door—our dear Rhodas, the imental Christians, who for the joy of it do ing about religion. But when Rhoda came up he disciples, they were no better either. They , "It can't be Peter. Can't be. You see, we are praying for him." But she said, "It is so." She ted, and then they said, "Oh, go away. You mad! It must be a spirit." That is what most ple get. They get the ghost of an answer to r prayers, because they do not really believe their prayer has been answered.

ut finally they opened the door, and there was r, and the disciples were amazed. Similarly, keep God's answer standing at the door, wait- God is more than willing to answer our true ers, but we do not believe enough to let in 's answer.

believe that the nations are ultimately in the as of God's hands—and our lives, if we only d to trust him. The prophets of the Bible did speak first of all about the armies of Nebu- dnezzar, or about the battles of Cyrus, but spoke about the mighty arm of the Lord re- ded to save his people. The prophets of the le saw everything in history in the light of God, he light of man's obedience or disobedience to l. Similarly, the reformers knew that ultimately er was not in the hands either of church or tate, but only in the hands of God. "Here I d. I can do no other, so help me God."

et us take history today, look at the prophecies, look at the reformation, at things in the light God. Our earthly lives, and the nations, have eiling and a floor. History can never become heaven. God has put a ceiling up there, against which we will bump our heads when we try to escape from our problems. Our earthly existence is here in order that we might learn through the solving of our problems. Similarly, history has a floor, so that nations are destroyed and individuals can commit suicide, but between the ceiling and the floor lives can either be strong and good or they can be heavy with hell. They can be here, or they can be there. This is true of individual lives. This is true of families or churches or nations, all of us, all where we are, in relation to our response to the will of God, as far as we know it.

### The Dark Curtain

When I first moved into what came to be for many years my beloved Southland, I was traveling one day on the train. In the dining car behind a dingy, dark curtain, sat one of the most serene, gentle, and yet strongest faces I have ever seen. The man wore a clerical collar. I wanted so much to join my brother minister, but I did not know whether it would be good or bad; therefore I just suffered for the conditions that kept us apart. When I came home I said to my friends, "I'm going to pray God that he take away that old black curtain." And they said, "Oh, that will never be taken away. We know how to do things, and that's the only way to do it. That curtain will never be taken away." I said, "God can do it, can't he?"

Within two or three months afterwards, the curtain was gone. You say the Supreme Court did it. Of course the Supreme Court did it, but that is not the way the prophets looked at it. The prophets looked at it in the light of God. They said God did it. The "curtain" is a terrific problem, and those of us who have suffered with and under the problem know that no easy solution can come. But those of us who know God know also that no state troops and no dynamiters can keep God from solving this problem if we have faith enough, as Christian people, to open the door and let Peter in. I know of no other solution, ultimately, because it cannot be solved only on the level of law. It must be solved on the level of love, of human acceptance as well as equality.

Take the case of the Iron Curtain. Every day my children used to pray in the morning devotion,

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"O God, please remove the Iron Curtain." And one day I dared to say, "You know, some day I want to preach in Russia. I want to preach the gospel in Russia." My realistic friends said, "Don't be ridiculous! Preach the gospel in Russia, in that totalitarian country? You'll never get in there." Since then the best preachers in America and Europe and Asia have been in Russia, preaching. It is a symbol! It is a symbol that God, if we trust him, can end the cold war that is defying his will and threatening universal destruction.

Before I went to England to preach last year, it used to be considered radical to believe that we must accept China into the United Nations. When I came back my college friends told me that now the majority of American people (according to the Gallup poll) are in favor of it. God breaks down the Iron Curtain—if we are Christian enough.

You have been praying about the undeveloped countries. How can we possibly have peace when fifty per cent of the world's population has nine per cent of its income? Here we cannot be complacent and self-righteous. And now, in the grace of God, the two richest nations on earth are competing in helping these countries and raising the whole standard of the world. "What an irony of history," you say. I say, "O, what a grace of God!" Within our generation one third of the world's population has found a new-found freedom. History is on the march, because God is on the move. I get so tired of hopelessness and nothing but hopelessness! I know history can turn to sudden and terrible destruction. But I also know that God is greater than every problem, and we hope against hope.

### War

We must also look at war in the light of God. I can never look my children in the face and not pray God about a solution here, because we could become hopeless. Many people are. One of America's foremost analysts has written, "Some time in the next few decades the human race is due to extinguish itself in one last fratricidal conflict." This statement is not made to shock readers. It is set down to record the end toward which all history points, the finale toward which we have been moving with constantly accelerating speed since 1914. This pitiful finish to man's long ascent from barbarism is not indicated because he still is a savage at heart. Indeed there are countless millions of decent peaceable people all the way around the world, people of many faiths and ideologies, who are good neighbors to each other as individuals. The trouble arises out of the fact that these same neighborly people are organized in national states, and the primary function of the state is defense against other states, or aggression against them, depending upon circumstances.

I sometimes think we are like a four-year-old boy who got into a fifty-ton bulldozer. He knew how to start it, and when he got it going it gave him a tremendous feeling of exhilaration and power. But then he became terrified as the juggernaut banged along, finally landing in the cellar of a house that used to be there. We are goi land in the cellar of a civilization that used there, unless we find the strength in God t beyond war. God can give us hope. He can fears, militarism, and substitute for them a po way of finding an international way of livin gether, a co-operative community built upon sanctions as further the common good, and ing else.

Have you ever tried to open a coconut? I re ber my frustration once in trying to do it. I wo and I worked. Then one day at the zoo I s coconut fed to an elephant, and the elep just gently leaned his foot on it and cracke When we face our problems within the realit God's great power, we are within a reality our own, a power not our own. In this spirit w must work for a stronger United Nations.

### Our Hope Against Hope

I haven't the wisdom to know what is goin come. I read Norman Cousins. I read Jame Warburg who says, "It is too soon for world ernment." It is too late for anything else. W are they going to do about it? I know, under and only under God, that we are going to the wisdom and the strength and the hope to the co-operative community on the internati level before it is too late. Our hope against ho in God.

Theologians of different persuasions are co to a central faith together. Outstanding Fu mentalists from coast to coast, young men, saying that they are going to accept everyt that the legitimate signs offer, that they are going to fight the Liberals, that they are goin try to understand and co-operate, with their standard to be God's love, wisdom, and powe Jesus Christ. What's happening to the Liber The Liberals are moving away from making hu experience and reason central, and coming t far fuller understanding of the central bibl faith of God's love in Christ.

What's happening to the New Orthodox? New Orthodox have been knocking down idols knocking down idols, and they are getting t of it. They are saying, "Where are we going go from here?" Have you read Paul Holmer's le in the *Christian Century* (January 22, 1958), Dr. Gill's reply to it (January 29, 1958)? O, things are happening—because God is moving.

What about the Catholics? You must trust G for the Catholics. He who is knocking our he together as Protestant leaders is not going to sp the old Catholic Church. You thank God for faith your Catholic neighbors have in God a in life after death. He who raised up, outside the Catholic Church, Moses and Luther, will ra up within the Catholic Church his St. Franci and Savonarolas. You see, when God uses the b dozer of his loving might, the hardest institut cracks. Our job is to do that bit of genuine lov that, like a little blade, cracks the strongest si walk. Or to use Luther's expression, "You lig

*(Continued on page 12)*

# Work

**By Wilbur H. Tyte**

OME years ago a doctor was writing out a prescription for me when he said, "This medi- that I am giving you is going to help your y to recover. If you were well, your body would need it, nor would it be influenced much by medicine. But at this time you need the help it will bring. Probably you could recover with- it, but it would take longer."

here are times in life when one feels a de- dency so deeply that something is desperately led to help him overcome such a feeling. De- dency and despair may wear off in time, but here anything that can be used to aid in their mination?

n medicine there are two words denoting nts that have the effect of aiding the body to come physical setbacks. One is *anodyne*, ning an agent that serves to assuage pain; the r is *antidote*, a remedy for poison, or an agent t tends to prevent or counteract unfriendly nts in the body. With such agents medicine been able to help the body in times of need. en faced with distress of spirit, the human soul ds anodynes or antidotes as badly as does the ly in its time of need.

### Means to an End

od in his infinite wisdom has created in this ld of interaction and interrelationships certain ans of helping a person to overcome hopeless- s in a situation. There *are* anodynes or anti- es that the soul may use. The great tragedy life is that they are often overlooked and their rapeutic value is lost, either because they are close at hand that we do not recognize them such, or we are so intent on our troubles that do not see them at all.

What are some of these anodynes or antidotes t may be of value to the individual who faces great tests of life? One to consider is work—in, old-fashioned, much despised work.

How do men ordinarily regard work? I am sure if we were to put that question to a large number of men, we would find many answers of varying opinions and shades of thought. I remember hearing about the remark of a developer of one of the famous horse farms in Kentucky. The person who was speaking summarized the successful man's philosophy of life in terms of work. This was it: "When you feel like working, work. When you don't feel like working, work. When you feel happy, work. When things are going wrong, work. When nothing you do seems to work, work." He is, in effect, saying, "Work is the answer to every problem." How his idea of the philosophy of work contests with the concept of the man who thinks of work in terms of something to get out of doing, whose whole idea is that work is an unpleasant experience and should be avoided whenever possible!

Some months ago I read a summary of the opinions of some of the leading industrialists of this country regarding the attitude of men whom they were hiring. They concluded—sadly—that, on the average, the goal of individuals in this time is not that of achieving the most out of the work they are undertaking. Their goal is to obtain security. Work is not the aim of life for them, but a means to safety.

In between the attitudes of the complete supremacy of work as a guiding motive for life and the idea that it is something that should be avoided are many attitudes of varying degrees, but the point that we may make here is that if work is to be an anodyne or an antidote to the distresses of life, work must be welcomed and not avoided. It must be appreciated at least as a means to an end, and not be regarded as an end to be escaped and despised.

### An End in Itself

For in work there is fulfillment of life. Search the Scriptures as we may, we can find no proof that God intended that we should have a life of ease and pleasure. Rather, we are placed in this world to create; the life that is lived to the fullest is one that creates and views his creation with pride.

One of the tragic aspects of our civilization is that craftsmanship is a lost art for most of us. The happy man is the man who can stand in front of

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his completed work and see it in all of its details. How can any man be happy as far as creativity is concerned when he merely has the assignment of putting bolt number ten on the chassis of an automobile that rolls beyond him to a final construction which he never sees? Craftsmanship is a lost art in these days, yet craftsmanship is the key to the fulfillment of life. As Rufus M. Jones has said, "Craftsmanship is consecration."

Work prepares us for the crises of life. It is in work that one comes to know his own strength and his own limitations. In work well done, one achieves a confidence that carries him into the problems of life with victorious results. One learns to assay things, to understand those things which are important and those which are unimportant. In work men learn to be magnanimous and understanding, for only those who do things are able to appreciate the triumphs and defeats of others.

Yes, work is more than a means to an end consisting of pleasure and happiness. In its supreme expression it is something that devout souls attest is a form of worship of God, an activity that complements directly and enhances the life of contemplation. It is a great truth that Van Dyke expresses when he says, ". . . the blessing of earth is toil." Men who have accepted that blessing have found that life has a purpose. Those who have fought against that blessing have found toil to be irksome and unbearable. So often we think of worship of God in terms of the offering of our hearts and minds and forget that what we do in life is as important as our thoughts and our attitudes. We cannot divide ourselves in our worship, and surely we realize that the greatest part of our life is spent in labor. That labor must be a part of our worship of God. It was St. Bernard who summarized this so well when he said, "He who prays and labors lifts his heart to God with his hands."

### Anodyne and Antidote

So far, we have said that work is the fulfillment of life, that it can prepare us for the crises of life, and that it is a form of worship of God. But beyond these values that work has, we should know that work will serve us ably as an anodyne or antidote in time of trouble. There is a therapy in work for the heart that has been broken. God gave us hands for work to bring release to minds in sorrow. Idle hands are simply a means to the continuation of distress. When we are doing things that are basic in creation, trouble begins to disappear. "A woman in sorrow finds surcease as she works her hands deep in the soil."

Sociologists report that women are better able to withstand the terrifying uncertainties of economic depressions than are men. A husband, bewildered and in despair over his unemployment, may become hesitant and apathetic in his thought and action, but the wife finds relief as she wields the broom and the mop and washes the dishes. The common task becomes an uncommon help.

Creativity can be the means of sublimating adversity, of meeting suffering and sorrow. Time after time, counselors of those who suffer grief have seen that when creative activity is directed [illegible] channels of usefulness, health can be regained [illegible] a new enthusiasm for living can be generated. A[illegible] too, we find that the only true rest in the worl[illegible] the rest that comes from work well done. "C[illegible] unto me all ye that travail and are heavy la[illegible] and I will refresh you" is a saying that through[illegible] the ages has brought promise to those in sor[illegible] All true Christians learn that the Christian f[illegible] is a faith that may be nurtured by work whe[illegible] is done to overcome adversity. As men have fa[illegible] walls of adversity and disappointment, they h[illegible] found that the use of their hands and minds [illegible] been a dynamic answer to their problems, and[illegible] they have used them to climb over those wa[illegible] they have gone on with confidence that all thi[illegible] work together for those that love God.

There is nothing static in the Christian fa[illegible] It is not a religion of resignation and accepta[illegible] of adversity and woe. It is centered about a l[illegible] torical character who, beset by persecution a[illegible] by the unfaithfulness of his followers, refused[illegible] give up. He continued steadily in the work of [illegible] vealing God, enabling men to know that he is w[illegible] those who, finding life at times unbearable, ref[illegible] to throw up their hands in despair and conti[illegible] to work for him.

You may ask, "How can you be sure that i[illegible] an eternal truth that work assuages pain a[illegible] sorrow? Is this, after all, a timeless and univer[illegible] principle?" The answer is that while God ex[illegible] riences sorrow as he continues to see evil ma[illegible] festing itself in all of its forms, he does not give [illegible] He continues to work that his kingdom may [illegible] an eventuality. We know that this is truth beca[illegible] we see good arising here and there. The hand[illegible] God is always behind activity and efforts that w[illegible] not let evil blot out the world. Surely we, w[illegible] our small share of suffering, grief and disappoi[illegible] ment, can do no less.

## God's New Age

*(Continued from page 10)*

God's little lantern. You light God's little lante[illegible] Trust God for the sun." This will not come ea[illegible] It will come insofar as we dare to respond.

When I was a boy in Sweden I used to ride[illegible] bicycle. I would pump and pump and pump to g[illegible] farther and farther up each time on the hill. T[illegible] summers ago I took my family there driving the[illegible] in a Chevrolet. Well, I was over the hills before[illegible] knew they were there. You see, we talk about te[illegible] sion. Tension is not wrong. Without tension [illegible] could not lift my arm. It is only destructive, m[illegible] directed tension that is wrong. O, what tensi[illegible] there was in that Chevrolet, in that motor, b[illegible] what relaxed tension when it purred over the hill[illegible] You let God be your motor. We say so often, "G[illegible] go with you." I want to say, "Go with God into h[illegible] new age. Don't keep God's answer standing at t[illegible] door knocking. Let Peter in."

*Wholehearted Delight in Playing*
*to the Glory of Both Man and God*

# Thoughts on Leisure

**By Hunter Beckelhymer**

LABOR Day used to be an occasion for remembering the artisan and the laborer. That was in days when these were forgotten men. It was—and it still is—to remind ourselves of what we owe to the skill and toil of others. Labor Day, too, used to be an occasion for saying nice things about labor unions. That was in the days when labor unions were unmistakably the underdogs in every battle they went into. And it is still well to remind ourselves at least once a year that what we read about unions in most of our newspapers and magazines represents management's viewpoint. Another reason for Labor Day was to glorify work itself. We need the need to counteract that ancient idea that work is a curse imposed by God upon man because of Adam's sin. Workers were reminded of the dignity and meaning of their jobs because of their vocation to essential industry, and because of their service to the human race. Now these are high themes and noble ideas. They need to be voiced and considered more than once a year. The religious dimension of all work is a reality to which we need to be awakened and reawakened.

But there is another aspect of living which has been sneaking up on us for a generation or so. It too is a religious dimension too. We are beginning to be awaken to it, but not nearly as fast as we need to. The name of this phenomenon is *leisure*. Now I know what you are thinking. With one silent voice, schoolteachers anticipating September's tidal wave of students, commuters who expect to catch the 7:15 Tuesday morning, farmers anticipating the evening chores, housewives thinking of that basket full of clothes to be ironed—with one voice you are saying, "*What* leisure?" *Your* leisure! The leisure you have right now. The leisure you will have twenty years from now when your babies are grown and have homes of their own. The leisure you will have from 65 to 85 years of age. Let us take a typical case; you adjust it to your own situation. Joe Doaks works for General Motors a forty hour week (probably he puts in a little more). He sleeps eight hours a night. That is a fifty-six hour week (probably he gets a little less). That leaves him 72 hours a week—ten hours a day when he is neither working or sleeping. And that does not include the fact of his vacation, holidays, and retirement on a pension at 65.

This trend will continue, if the human race does not blow itself up with hydrogen bombs. Our children will work fewer hours, live higher, and retire younger than we. Furthermore, our life expectancy has increased, is increasing, and will increase—thanks to modern medicine. In due time this trend will extend to other parts of the world. It is a fact of life for the American people now. We shall work fewer hours per day, fewer days per year, for fewer decades of a longer life. A cartoon in a recent *New Yorker* showed a dispirited young man gazing aimlessly out of the picture window of his beautiful home. His mother was explaining to a visiting neighbor: "Hubert was just beginning to find himself when he was displaced by automation." In a sense, the American people are all in Hubert's boat.

This is a *problem?* Yes, for many people it is. And it will become more so for more people. The industrial worker is harder and harder put to it to find meaning and dignity in the pitiful fragment of creativity which is his job. And he does not know where else to look for meaning and dignity. Intelligent and energetic homemakers are nervous and dissatisfied among their porcelain appliances. Among the old people whom I know, more are suffering from boredom and a sense of uselessness than are suffering from material want. Our leisure is increasing and we do not know what to do with it except to seek fleeting diversions. More and more people become like those described by T. S. Eliot:

> Distracted from distraction by distraction,
> Filled with fancies, and empty of meaning.[1]

Now then, what to do about it? Here I must confess that in preparing what I have to say I felt like Abraham of old who went out not knowing where he was to go. I only know that the issue is a real one that needs some Christian insight to be brought to bear upon it.

First, affirm leisure. We have no proper place for it in our philosophy of life. We have been brought up on the pioneer virtues of ambition, industriousness, and toil. Our folklore from childhood has been filled with fables condemning the shiftless grasshopper,

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[1]T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton," *Collected Poems*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1936). Used by permission.

and praising the hard working ant. Our current image of success is the executive who keeps six secretaries busy by day, and takes his briefcase full of work home with him at night. By the same token, we regard leisure with considerable suspicion. At least we feel uneasy about it. It bothers our consciences. "Idleness" is the odious word which previous generations have pinned upon it. And when, by some strange coincidence, a lapse occurs in our many activities, chosen and unchosen, we cannot sit still. We jump up, walk around, and say "I feel that I ought to be doing something." Why? *Why?* We are like the traveling salesman who while on the road one Sunday morning decided to go to church. He dropped in on a Quaker meeting, which he had never seen before. Telling his wife about it later, he said, "Everyone was just sitting there not saying a word, so I stood up and told a few funny stories just to break the ice."

The first step in meeting this problem, as all problems, is honesty. Leisure is not a disgrace. So there is no point in pretending that you never have any. Your neighbors will not snub you if you admit that your services are not needed 24 hours a day. Probably they will welcome the chance to admit that they do not have to work all the time either. Then maybe together you can find some better use yet for your non-working hours. What we need is a positive attitude toward leisure. It is what the modern world has been working for, and now we have it. Let us accept it without embarrassment or apology. The word "leisure" is used just once in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Jesus' disciples in zeal for his work "were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat" (Mark 6:31). Jesus said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest awhile."

Second, play now! Play a little bit every day if possible, every week for sure. I know that a couple just getting started with their home and family have to work hard. But so many people do not know when to stop "getting started." Gordon Rattray Taylor has observed:

> It is quite normal and unneurotic to work and make money with which to support one's family. But to work incessantly, subordinating all other interests and modes of activity, to work with frenzied application, day after day, is distinctly neurotic.[2]

One of the most common and most devastating mistakes of our day is for a young man to work so obsessively to make things nice for his family that he literally loses his family. That is tragic. Play now with your families. On the summer roads these days one sees lots of young couples with their cars crammed to the guards with luggage and youngsters, off on a family vacation. That is one of the healthiest trends in American life in the last fifty years.

We have an ambiguous attitude toward play. We seem to regard it as frivolous in young adults, but all right for the aged. We admire a man who retires at 60 with enough money to move to Miami Beach. Many say to themselves, "I will work double time now so that I can retire early with enough money to play and have a good time." Don't fool yourself that one! Don't put off anything until you ret Because then, when you do retire, you won't kn how to do it. Worse yet, you won't care to learn you ever expect to take music lessons, start now you ever expect to play golf, or paint pictures, collect stamps, or write letters, or travel, or re good books, or teach a church school class, be now—or you are not likely to do so when you ret The hobbies and interests that enliven old age those begun when younger.

Remember Jesus' parable of the successful farm who planned to retire and live it up just as soon he rebuilt his barns once more. Jesus called him fool. One reason is surely that this character thou in terms of material values only. Another is that idea of a good time was just to eat, drink, and merry. A third reason for Jesus' harsh judgme (less frequently mentioned) might have been th he put it off too long. Jesus said that unless we become as little children we cannot enter the kingdo of heaven. Does not becoming as a little child clude a wholehearted delight in playing?

### Glimpse of the Ultimate

Third, maybe you are one who must seek t meaning of your life in your avocations rather th in your vocation. That will be increasingly true more and more people. Some professional people their work are able to render a direct and obvio service to their fellow men and hence to their Lor And they can work at that vocation until they d if they want to. Others in our modern world find harder and harder to discover a satisfying person identity in the jobs by which they earn their brea They work at it fewer and fewer hours, and will st down with their economic function in life fulfill while they are still in the prime of life. If these a to find a satisfying personal identity they must fi it in their avocations. Thank God that is possib to do. In fact, God may have intended human d velopment to go in this direction toward some ne Eden. Maybe the Creator intended that the wo we do to eat bread become a tiny portion of o lives, and ultimately all work and play alike to b done for the joy of the doing—to the upbuilding man and the glory of God. Maybe that is exact what God intends.

The word "leisure" appears only once in the R vised Standard Version of Scripture, but in the Se tuagint, a Greek translation of the Old Testamen made in 270 A.D. and still in use in the Eastern O thodox Church, the Greek word for leisure is use two other times. They suggest unmistakably tha leisure is not just recuperation from and for labo but is a thing of inherent value in itself. In Exodu 5:8, we are told that Pharaoh increased the He brews' work load by requiring them to gather thei own straw to make bricks, "for they have leisur therefore they cry, Let us go and offer sacrifice t our God." The other use of the word is in Psal 46:10, where we are commanded, "Be at leisur and know that I am God." Here, I do believe, w get a glimpse of the ultimate meaning of leisur and the destination of our lives.

[2]Gordon Rattray Taylor, *The Conditions of Happiness* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951). Used by permission.

## Saying Good-By

*(Continued from page 5)*

ugh, that only selves can love each other. Only es can know and understand each other. Frag- its cannot. Roles cannot.

Gian-Carlo Menotti has thrown a piercing light this whole question in his powerful opera *The nsul.* The story takes place in a small European ntry governed by totalitarian power. John Sorel been a hero in the fight for freedom against the ator, but he has been apprehended and has fled n adjacent land. Still at home is his wife Magda h their child. She knows that unless she can join husband quickly, his loyalty will bring him back her, in which case he will be caught and killed. she visits the consulate of the neighboring coun- and tries to get the necessary papers to cross the der. Not allowed to talk to the consul, she pleads:

MAGDA: I must see my John, and you, only you, can help me. May I speak to the Consul?

SECRETARY: I give you these papers, this is how to begin. Your name is a number, your story is a case, your need a request, your hopes will be filed. Come back next week.

MAGDA: And will you explain to the Consul?

SECRETARY: But what is there to explain?

MAGDA: Explain that John is a hero. . . . Explain that the web of my life has worn down to one single thread, that the hands of the clock glitter like knives. Explain to the Consul, explain!

SECRETARY: But what is there to explain?

MAGDA: Explain that John is a hero, explain that he's *my* John! Explain to the Consul, explain! Tell him my name, tell him my story, tell him my need!

SECRETARY: Fill in these papers, this is how to begin. Your name is a number, your story is a case, your need a request, your hopes will be filed. Come back next week.

(It's no wonder that Magda then explodes:)

If to men, not to God, we now must pray,
Tell me, Secretary, tell me,
Who are these men?
If to them, not to God, we now must pray,
Tell me, Secretary, tell me!
Who are these dark archangels?*

You see what has happened? I am not using the ive argument that as soon as a man neglects God, becomes a villain. We know men of great moral tegrity, admirable men, who appear to be living thout God. I am saying that when a man neglects od, he becomes less than a real person. Hopes cease be selves-in-action and become papers in filing binets. In a world where God is neglected, we id a confusion of abstractions, of beings that are much less than selves. Soon we are crying out no nger to God but to the dark archangels that gov- n our fate.

In this swift-paced world, machines, under the ventive skill of our masters of technology, are be- oming year by year more like men, while men so ften are becoming less like men. We look to the ture, and we wonder: will the two processes meet ne day and perhaps pass each other up? What is the destiny of sub-human people in a world of almost-human machines?

But to all this there is another word to be spoken. Even if we have been saying good-by to God, he has not been just staying back there. We only thought we were saying good-by. The literal meaning of "good-by" is "God be with you." You cannot even say good-by to God without acknowledging him. For God has created heaven and earth and man. You don't just walk out on him.

You see, our very restlessness, our boredom with trivialities, our irritability, our desire to break out of this role-playing into selfhood, our frustrations—all these are evidences of a light that shines into our world, of a radiance whose source we cannot crush out.

God seeks us. Often we wish it were not so. For though saying good-by has its pain, it sometimes seems a release. When we leave the old haunts, the nosy people who knew us there, we experience a kind of liberation. So it is sometimes when we leave the old God. We feel free. We are glad to leave him.

But he follows us, annoys us, drives us to agonizing questions, refuses to let us go. He calls us back from the freedom of escape to the freedom of genuine self-hood. Some day we may discover that we are glad it is so, that we are glad *He is so.*

*Gian-Carlo Menotti, *The Consul,* (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1950), sed by permission.

## Pastoral Prayer

O GOD, so much of our worship is taken up with talking *about* thee! In these moments we are talking *with* thee. We bring thee more than words of praise; we offer thee our lives to be cleansed of evil and self-conceit.

May we live the abundant and eternal life of which Jesus is the pattern and the giver. When the pressure of opinion draws us into conformity may we adhere to the truth. When ease lures us may we be strong. When sorrow comes and disappointment confronts us may we face them with valor that is free from self-pity and frenzy. When the tides of doubt or disillusionment sweep about us may we cling to the cords of faith we have tested until they greaten to a strand that cannot be broken.

We pray not for ourselves alone. We offer our petitions for those whose poverty dulls their spiritual hunger; for those who suffer from injustice and are barred from opportunity; for those in whose homes selfishness and indifference have banished love and fidelity. Mindful of the brave struggle many are making, we beseech thee to grant them the courage to overcome hardship, the integrity that survives sneers and the goodwill that can prevail over hostility.

May the spirit of Jesus quicken in men's lives such righteousness, such loving concern and such glad trust in thee that thou canst once again look on thy handiwork and see that it is good. *Amen.*
*—Harold L. Bowman, pastor emeritus, First Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Illinois.*

# The General and the Specific

**By Roger A. Cowan**

YOU will forgive me for quoting from my son's favorite story. It is called "Horton Hatches the Egg." Horton was an elephant. A lazy bird persuaded him to sit on her egg while she went on vacation. Kindhearted Horton propped up the small tree in which was the nest. Carefully, he climbed into the tree and sat down. But while he sat there, warming the egg, three hunters sneaked up behind. What happened?

He heard the men's footsteps! He turned with a start!
Three rifles were aiming, Right straight at his heart!
Did he run? He did not! Horton stayed on the nest!
He held his head high, And he threw out his chest,
And he looked at the hunter as much as to say;
"Shoot if you must, but I won't run away!
I mean what I said, And I said, what I meant—
An elephant's faithful, one hundred per cent."*

So good elephants, like good Christians, are faithful one hundred per cent. The Christian story is the story of men and women who said, "Shoot if you must, but I won't run away!" The people we call saints, the dedicated ones, are people who are faithful one hundred per cent. Christ does not expect that we will be always right. We are finite and filled with sin. He fully expects that we will be always faithful!

Will you notice this? Life does not deal with generalities. It deals with specifics. We cannot believe one thing and do another. A man cannot merely hold to ideals as such. They are either workable or they are not really ideals. This is true in everything. The scientist does not merely accept a formula as true. He tests it in a lab. If it works, the formula is true. If it does not work, the formula is false. But there is no such thing as science with a true formula which will not work in practice. What startles us and troubles us these days is not what science has thought but what science has accomplished.

Think of this in government. A nation cannot say one thing in principle and do another in practice. This is our great modern difficulty. The Declaration of Independence has fine words—"All men are created equal . . . liberty and justice to all." But we are dupes for Russian propaganda. All the world knows the facts. And the facts—what we practice—are our principles. We let men die for freedom in Korea. But we will not let them vote for it in Mississippi. We talk better than we l

The founders of Communism had high ide Overthrow the Czar, abolish a corrupt religi make everyone comrades. But our propaganda c to the core and reveals the Russian lie. Khrushc may speak of freedom, but he rules a slave st

And both of us together, East and West, sp of peace. We say we believe in peace. We pl for understanding, yet we both arm to the teeth child knows what we really believe and whom think we are kidding. Our practice is our princi Our real belief is what we do. It is not the gene but the specific which threatens to undo us.

### A Child Knows

Consider literature. The great books do not d with generalities. They deal with specifics. We a attracted to Hamlet and King Lear because their personalness. Their very provincialism mak them universal. Their particular point in ti makes them timeless. For centuries men have lov "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner." The po does not begin by saying "This morning we a going to discuss the principles of navigation." begins, " 'There was a ship,' quoth he." The auth got a ship. He put people on it. And we rememb the story. So my son would be little interested a book which began, "There once was a lar animal who was approached by a smaller anim and asked to consider doing a certain service." has an elephant, Horton; a lazy bird, Mayzie; a egg; some hunters. There's life! And at three yea of age my son understands it.

All this is by way of saying that Christianity a most particular religion. God did not leav messages on papyrus for someone to discover wh passed by. He spoke to a man named Abraham. H did not say, "I am unapproachable. You can know me and are therefore not responsible." H said, "I will make a covenant with you, a mutua agreement resulting in mutual action. You will b faithful to me, and I will be your God." So Isra in slavery did not say, "We believe it is wrong t

*Dr. Seuss, *Horton Hatches the Egg* (New York: Random House, 1940).

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laves but we must stay slaves." Israel acted—
ough a specific man—Moses; against a specific
—Pharaoh. And Israel was free from a par-
lar place—Egypt; to a particular place—
aan.

ater, the word of the God did not come to
one in general at no place in particular. It
e to a certain individual, Isaiah; at a specific
e, the temple; at a specific time, the year King
iah died.

nd what does John say about Jesus? "In Him
word was made flesh and dwelt among us full
grace and truth." The abstract became con-
e. He was not just a teacher of truth, a believer
ruth. He was the very truth of God in action.
did not say one thing and do another, believe
way and act another. You cannot separate his
ching from his life. We call him Savior not
ause he taught truth but because he is truth.

### Flesh and Blood Lord

Matthew makes clear that the God who is tran-
ndent has become personal. Jesus was born at
lace—Bethlehem; at a time—when Herod was
g. The incarnation means precisely that we
e a God in our history. Not a far-off deity
ding out rules and luncheon club slogans, but
esh and blood Lord out on all the roads of life,
confronting men, demanding decision. "Are you for
or against me?" That is the eternal question.

We are so interested in keeping what we have.
want to have a united church, a happy congre-
ion, a personal peace. But Christ talks always
of having but becoming. It is not what we
n but what we are. A man's life does not consist
the abundance of things he possesses. What did
us get out of life—hung on a hill? What did
ul get—stoned and beaten and left for dead?
hat did Peter get—crucified upside down? No, if
s gospel is to make sense, it will not be in terms
having even the good and desirable things. The
spel consists of being, becoming, of staying
thful to Christ.

The verb "to be" is much stronger than the
b "to have." We may have a successful church,
wded worship services, high budgets. But we
not concerned with having. As Christians we
to be Christ's, whatever we have.

Does not our Scripture mean more today than
r, however often we have heard it before? Be-
e it may have been a nice familiar story. Today
is sharp-edged truth. Seeds of truth are sown
on rocky ground. They are received with joy
en they are heard. But then when tribulation
persecution arises on account of the word, imme-
ately they fall away. Other words are sown
ong thorns; they are those who hear the word
t the cares of the world (public opinion), the
sire for other things (popularity, prestige), enter
and choke the word and it proves fruitless. But
ose sown upon good ground are the ones that
ar the word and accept it and bear fruit. Notice
at: they hear, they believe, they act. They can-
t believe and not act.

Always Jesus is forcing the issue. The command is not "give mental acceptance to me." It is "follow me." Again, Christ said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven. But he who does the will of my father." There was a book on ethics published a couple of years back called, *Doing the Truth*. The book was not so good but the title was excellent. In the Greek, truth is a verb. It is something we do.

Who can forget the trial of Peter and John in the fourth chapter of Acts? Peter and John had been preaching the resurrection of Christ to Jews who believed not. And they made converts. But the Elders were dismayed. They asked, "What shall we do with these men?" They were upset. And in their fear they order Peter and John to speak no more to anyone of Christ. But—and this is a direct quote—"Peter and John answered them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge. For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.' " You see, they had to do that. Peter and John were not taking a straw vote. They listened to God and spoke for him.

Again in the fifth chapter, the high priest questioned them saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." That is to say, Peter and John were determined to preach a whole gospel and so make everyone responsible for a decision. And Peter and the Apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than man." When they heard them they were enraged and went to kill them. But a wise teacher in the law saved the day. He said of the disciples, "If this plan or this undertaking is of men it will fail, but if it is of God you will not be able to overcome them. You might even be found opposing God!" And Luke adds, "So they took his advice."

It was good advice—and still is. If any action is of man, done out of pride, done to promote self, done for personal satisfaction, it will fail. But if it is of God, men cannot defeat it. We might even be found opposing God! We have to believe this if we believe that righteousness is written into the fabric of the universe.

You will understand the point I have been making. I have chosen to speak to you from Scripture, for Scripture is our guide to faith and practice. And in Scripture faith and practice are one. James put it bluntly. "Faith without works is dead. But be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. Show me your faith apart from your works and I by my works will show you my faith. You believe God is one: you do well, even the demons believe and shudder!" Right! Anyone can believe the truth in general. Christians are those who do the truth in particular.

Out in Washington State there was a lumber camp. Downstream was a little community. The people there would fish the floating logs out of the river. They would saw off the ends which bore the lumber company stamp. Then they would take the logs and build houses for themselves. The preacher got wind of this. Sunday he preached a

sermon on "Thou shalt not steal." After the service, the congregation greeted him warmly and thanked him. Next Sunday he preached on "Thou shalt not cut the ends off other people's logs." And they ran him out of town.

The generalities did not bother them. The specific was what hurt. So anyone can say "God in Christ reconciled the world to himself." But we must discern how God in this place and this time will reconcile us to himself in Christ.

The grandeur and the glory of the gospel is this: The Christ who lives demands decision in specific situations. He does not want our platitudes, our platforms. He wants us. And the wonder is that he is at once both the problem and the answer. For he is the comforter. And comfort means not solace or absence of conflict. Comfort means "with strength." He is our strength. He leads us to endure the unendurable, to face the unfaceable. He is at once the crucified and the resurrected, the one whom we have slain and into whom we have died and through whom we shall live. Will you pray that he will now be our comfort, our strength, and that we, believing and doing, will be faithful to him?

# Prayer

*At the Laying of the Cornerstone of a New Public High School*

OUR God and our Father, source of all wisdom and truth, thou great lover of the souls of men, we praise thee that in thy divine wisdom thou hast brought us to this day. With the overcoming of many obstacles we lay this cornerstone with trowel and mortar and prayer.

We thank thee for those architects, draftsmen and engineers who have planned and supervised this work; for those laborers, masons, electricians, carpenters, mechanics and others who have wrought well that a school should be built.

We thank thee, too, for those men and women of our board of education who give freely of their time and effort, thought and energy in the directing of this school system. Help them to be courageous in planning, zealous in concern and thoughtful in administration. May their work be blessed in the heritage given to future generations.

Consecrate this building, we pray thee, to the instruction and guidance of youth. May their eyes be opened, their minds broadened, their horizons widened, and their spirits inspired.

May those who here teach be likewise consecrated that their profession become a calling, their vocation an avocation, and their service done as unto thee. Help them to help future generations to rise to higher levels through their wisdom and faithfulness. Gird them for their task with thy patience and tranquillity, with a great fatherly and motherly love for those they teach. Save them from physical exhaustion, from loneliness and discouragement, from numbness of routine, and from all bitterness of heart. May all others here involved with the work of education from janitor to p[rin]cipal have a sense of noble service in their task[s].

We bless and praise thee for our heritage[s] democracy, of freedom and liberty, of justice un[der] law. Let those learn who here study, and th[ose] know who here teach, the lessons of sacrifice [and] selflessness which have made this nation gr[eat]. We bless thee for our religious faith and the f[ree]dom wherewith we may exercise it. Though [we] come from varying faiths, we bow humbly be[fore] thee as the author and creator of life. Keep us [in] holy obedience unto thee and bless us as we g[ive] ourselves to do thy will. *Amen.—William Twiddy, Centenary Methodist Church, Metuch[en], New Jersey.*

# Labor Day Prayer

WE pray for all who labor day and ni[ght] around the world, with whom we are bou[nd] by a thousand ties of interdependence. We rec[og]nize that food, clothing, shelter, commerce, cultu[re] and philosophy are ours because of the debt [we] owe to others who toil for us. We think of t[he] builders of skyscrapers, tunnels, bridges, ships a[nd] planes; of operators of machines, flaming st[eel] furnaces and subways; of laborers in mine, fie[ld] and jungle and amid the whirr of the producti[on] line; of those who risk their lives to keep arter[ies] of communication open by land, sea and air. M[ay] they be conscious of our appreciation and recei[ve] the satisfaction that comes through work w[ell] done.

We remember in thy presence workers who a[re] enslaved in many lands, whose cry for justice [is] lifted up to thee: for conscript laborers in Afric[a]; for child apprentices in China and Japan; for t[he] farmers of India enslaved by debts; for peons [of] Latin America and sharecroppers of our natio[n]; for slum dwellers, whose pallid faces long for t[he] sun; for watchers of machines, who live and d[ie] under the shadow of bleak factories and the smo[ke] of belching chimneys. We pray for the weary, th[e] sick and the oppressed who labor without hop[e]; for those who are underpaid; for those who ha[ve] little leisure and beauty; for the jobless and th[e] homeless.

Forgive us for the exploitation of life, for th[e] effort to wrest wealth from the poverty of other[s] for avaricious grasping after personal gain. Ma[y] we learn that all workers are brothers. Enlighte[n] our minds, that we may abolish the evils of oppre[s]sion. May we all find work to strengthen our mus[-] cles and call out the best that is within us, as w[e] toil for the common good. Unite us with our fello[w] men in use of hand and brain, that there may b[e] bread for the starving and brotherhood for th[e] lonely. May we labor together to build a worl[d] free from insecurity, waste and exploitation. W[e] pray in the spirit of the carpenter of Nazareth whose hands were calloused with toil and wer[e] ever ready to serve. *Amen.—Robert M. Bartlett First Congregational Church, Shrewsbury, Mass.*

*t the Spirits*
*See If They Are of God*

# The Return to Religion— By What Road?

**By John J. Bunting, Jr.**

E ARE living in our country today in the midst of what can only be called a return to gion. Churches once empty are now filled. Church suries once lean are now fat. Religious books, confined to the back shelves, are now displayed he front windows and lead the best seller list. e than in many years, indeed more than in sev- generations, we are witnessing a return to gion.

he question we are now asking is this: By what l is this return being made? This is a question ch must be asked. It does matter by what road return is being made. There is a relation between destination to which we are going and the road which we go. There is a relation between the end seek to attain and the means we use to attain it. f therefore one enters a group on the basis of representation concerning it and incomplete in- nation about it, he is later disillusioned. Injustice done both to him and the group, and more harm n good is the total result. We believe therefore t we have a right and have a duty to ask the ure of the present return to religion. We rejoice it, we share in it, but we want it to be the right d of return.

By the same token we insist that no person or vement is above criticism or analysis. "No one holy save God." Jesus said, "Beware of false phets." John later said, "Test the spirits to see hey are of God." That advice was good then. It equally good today.

### Humility

The road to any significant return to religion uld be marked, first, by humility. There are in- cations that the quality of humility is not always sent in the current return to religion. It is sug- sted by some that if one will lift the hand and sign ard he thereby becomes a Christian. Others say at if he will type a Scripture passage on a card, put on his mirror and read it each morning, he will thereby attain personal power and of course great wealth. Some maintain that if one will sit before his television set, allow the hand of healing to reach out and touch him, and send a card to confirm the same, he will thereby be healed. We are told by still others that if in the name of prayer we tell God what to do, he will do it. Thus true religion, wherein we ask God what to do, is twisted into primitive magic, when we tell God what to do and force him to it by means of various devices. This modern practice of primitive magic leads to spiritual pride in which one declares, "I pray well, you do not; therefore I get what I want, but you do not." All these trends upon the current scene obviously do not share in humility.

When one turns to the pages of religious history and studies the return to religion taken by the great spirits, he always finds it done in an atmosphere of humility. Moses, when he beheld the burning bush and knew he stood on holy ground, took off his shoes. Isaiah, who saw God in the temple, declared, "Woe is me, for I am unclean." Paul, who found a new faith in the dust of the Damascus road, cried out to his Christ, "What wilt thou have me do?" Martin Luther, after years of searching and after prostration upon the steps of the Vatican, returned to Germany to find in simple words of Scripture the deepening of his faith. John Wesley, who returned from Georgia asking, "Who will save John Wesley?" found religious assurance in a little chapel on a London side street. And Jesus, beginning the platform of his faith in the Sermon on the Mount, said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (those who know they are poor in spirit) "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Humility is the first step in a genuine return to religion.

### Growth

Humility never stands alone. It is the basis for something else. That something else is growth. Jesus, after speaking of the poor in spirit, then said, "Blessed are the meek." Who are the meek? They are the people who learn the ground rules of life and are not ashamed to do so. They keep learning and as they learn, they grow, and thus they "inherit the earth."

There are signs that growth is not always the mark of the current return to religion. There are many who think that religion is a sudden, an overnight, an automatic affair. They think this probably

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because of the kind of culture in which we live. We move fast in everything else we do, so why not in our religion? We get our entertainment in capsule form, our news in capsule form, sometimes our food in capsule form, so why not our religion? We do almost everything else in our lives in an automatic, mechanical fashion, so why not our religion? All of this creates a prejudice against growth.

The human personality, even in our mechanical age, is still basically the same. It takes the same time to reach maturity, in fact it now takes longer. The same principles of parental guidance still hold, the same essential process of learning the hard lessons of life. Now, religion is the business of the human personality; and if the human personality demands growth, then of course the religious personality requires growth. Growth demands time, but time alone is not enough. It must be time well employed.

When we talk of growth we are really talking of what we more often call Christian education. It has taken us a long time to learn, and we are still learning that you do not build a vital church or mold Christian character by telling your children a few Bible stories and then forgetting it; by producing an emotional storm in adolescence or reciting a catechism and then forgetting it; by holding the idea that worship is a haphazard affair and that it doesn't matter what is said or what is sung or what the setting of worship is; or by avoiding the social issues which swirl about us and adopting an ostrich-like attitude toward them. We weaken the church, we weaken character when we do these things, because we are not causing the church to grow, we are not letting her people or ourselves grow.

### Truth

One must always grow toward something. The Christian is growing toward truth. There are evidences that the desire for truth is not everywhere present in the current return to religion. What is most alarming is in some quarters the frank refusal to seek or to face truth. There is the stubborn resistance to a study or an analysis of the new voices among us, those who claim to be Messiah. There is the idea that if one will say the word "sin" often enough, he has thereby washed it away; or if he says "salvation" often enough he has thereby brought it; or if he recites the word "Jesus" often enough, particularly with a certain incantation, he has thereby explained him; and if he will refer to the Bible as the Word of God and particularly carry it about with him, he has thereby brought its message. There is still on a limited basis the attitude of fear toward new translations of the Bible and new archeological findings, as if they will destroy one's faith.

In contrast to all of this, let this be our axiom: that any phase of a return to religion or any advocate who implies a moratorium on the processes of the mind or the use of the intelligence shall have no place in our religious lives.

This is the greatness of Christianity—that we believe the search for truth and the search for God are one and the same, that we believe the light of God and the light of truth are the same light. And our central conviction is that the glory of God and the glory of man came to a point of intersection in t fullest revelation of truth, Jesus Christ.

When John in his immortal first chapter describ the meaning of Christ, he turned to the intellects his time, the Greeks, to do it and wrote, "In the b ginning was the Word" (the logos, the truth). therefore was saying, "In the beginning was t *truth*, and the *truth* was with God and the *truth* w God." Later he said, "The *truth* became flesh a dwelt among us."

University students ask their professors and re gious counselors every year this question, "What the relation between biblical and scientific truth This question is understandable. The next one ho ever is always amazing: "Shall I explore this rel tionship and follow where it leads?" The answer "Of course, by all means follow it; do no other."

For this is true religion—to think one's way, feel one's way, to serve one's way to an understan ing of God. Jesus used this word *truth* at strateg points. He said, "Ye shall know the truth, and t truth shall set you free." He used it when he defin himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the light And in one of the later Beatitudes he said "Blesse are the pure in heart." By "heart" he meant t whole personality, the mind, the emotions, the spiri And by "purity" he meant clarity and honesty mind and spirit in whatever human quest was i volved, as man seeks the best, the truest, the mo God-like. And of these he said, ". . . they sha see God." The church offers to its children this a surance—that wherever one begins the quest an however he pursues it, so long as it is done honestl conscientiously, untiringly, as he studies the worl of nature, lives with other human personalities, e amines the inner chambers of his own soul, at las he will reach out and touch the face of God. To th the quest for truth and the return to religion alway come. They are in reality the same.

The *Journals of John Wesley* are among the clas sics of Christian literature. They reveal many fas cinating things about this remarkable man. The show especially how Wesley after his movement ha started was engaged constantly in the struggle t keep the Methodists true to the central doctrines o the church. His was the same struggle as that o Paul in the first century. There were persons an groups who continuously wanted to move Method ism toward Moravianism or Calvinism or quietism o mysticism. This was really the central struggle sometimes the very bitter struggle, of Wesley's life

He tried to make it clear at all times he was a believer in the central truths of the Christian faith He disavowed being a dissenter in any sense. An because Wesley stoutly maintained this stand, h saved Methodism from becoming just another reli gious sect, soon to fade into oblivion, and laid the foundation for its becoming a great church. This wa possible because John Wesley in his return to reli gion was loyal above all else to the truth.

My little five-year-old girl has as her favorite book just now one entitled *Bartholomew and the Oobleck.** This is the story of King Derwin of the Kingdom of Didd, who is very unhappy and ex

*Theodor Geisel (New York: Random House, 1948).

ely irritated because he is tired of having the e old things come down from the sky—the rain e spring, the sun in the summer, the fog in the and the snow in the winter. He wants a change. vants something new and sensational. He there- calls his magicians together and orders them roduce something new from the sky. They prom- him they will do so and that the name of it will *obleck.*

he next morning as little Bartholomew Cubbins, only bright person in the story, looks up from window, he sees small green flakes falling from sky. This he assumes is the oobleck. The flakes tinue to fall, they become larger and larger, first size of peanuts and then the size of baseballs. oobleck is a rubbery, sticky substance, which n produces havoc. When the king orders the bell ger to ring the bell in celebration, he cannot do ecause the bell is stuck with oobleck. When the mpeter tries to blow his trumpet he cannot do so ause the trumpet is stuck with oobleck. It soon ins to ooze into the buildings and to break the dows and even to collapse some of the walls, so cky and heavy it is. At last some one thinks of king, and wonders how he is. Little Bartholo- w goes and finds that "the seat of the royal pants stuck to the seat of the royal throne." The king in nsternation wonders what should be done. Bar- olomew replies that since the magicians are stuck their own oobleck, the only thing to do is for the g to say that he is sorry. The king angrily replies at no king has ever said that he is sorry. Bartholo- w then declares, "You may be a king, but you are to your neck in oobleck."

### The Seasons Return

The king finally relents and says that he is sorry. soon as he does, the oobleck stops falling and at has fallen quickly melts away. And that day e king has a celebration, not in observance of the bleck but with deep and heartfelt thanks for the me old things which come down from the sky, ings he now appreciates more than ever before— e rain in the spring, the sun in the summer, the g in the fall, and the snow in the winter.

If we wish to make the current return to religion our own return significant and lasting, we can it not by asking for something new and sensa- onal from the sky. We have all we need. If we ill use the book which rests upon the sacred desk d which rests often neglected at home, with the ne and solid guides provided for its study; if e will go to the appointed place of worship with reater regularity and renewed devotion, with open ind and searching spirit; if we will study again e great beliefs of the Christian faith and what ey say about God and about man—we will find ll we need.

We will find our faith not magically inscribed pon the three-by-five card. We will find it in- cribed upon the tablets of the heart as this faith ecomes a vital part of our being and of our lives.

Our return to religion will be genuine and sig- ificant if it is marked by these three: humility, rowth, truth. We will then be building not upon the sand of an ephemeral sensationalism. We will be building upon the rock of truth—old only in that it has been well tested, new with all the freshness and timeliness of that which is eternal.

# The Dedication of a School

IT is right and proper that this school building, erected to provide public education for the children of this community, should be formally set apart. For such a dedication we have gathered together.

This building embodies the hopes and the ideals of the citizens of our community. Here children are surrounded with the best of facilities for a well-rounded education. No generation of children in this community has had such privileges. Here each child is encouraged and directed toward the fulfillment of all his gifts and graces. Here is a place where life takes on larger proportions and values.

We dedicate this building to provide for every child regardless of race, religion or economic status, the privileges of an education.

We dedicate this building for the training of our youth for responsible citizenship.

We dedicate this building as a center of a community force; a place where parents and all citizens find work, association, learning, and inspiration.

We dedicate this building as a place where the ideals of democracy are expressed and nurtured and where the foundations of a free nation are laid.

We dedicate this building for the nurture of those ideals and values upon which all our community associations and our activities must rest.

We dedicate this building to the glory of God, acknowledging him as the Creator and Director of all life and of all our affairs. Let us pray:

Almighty God, in whom resides all wisdom and understanding, we praise thee. We thank thee for our public schools so worthily established. We glory in their catholicity through which no child is barred from the advantages of learning.

We are encouraged that the human mind can grow and increase in learning and discernment, and that wisdom and understanding can grow from more to more. We glory in the possibility that children can scan broad vistas, that they can be awakened to the desire to serve mankind, and that magnanimity, goodwill, and service can team up with learning in lives dedicated to good.

Especially do we thank thee for this school now open, for its pupils, teachers, staff, board members, parents, and all citizens. Let it be our school in that we all believe in it greatly and support it worthily. Guide us to give ourselves in dedicated service that this building in fact be dedicated to the worthy task of guiding youth into the rich promises of maturity. This we pray in the name of him who grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and men. *Amen.—Mark Rich, at the dedication of the Rock Bridge Elementary School, Columbia, Missouri.*

# Caricatures of the Gospel

**By Harry Hutchison**

*If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.* Galatians 1:9.

IF you read between the lines of the first chapter of Paul's letter to the Galatians, you will see that these very strong words were prompted by a real crisis in the Galatian church. What, in a word, was the reason for this letter at all? It was the danger of a distorted gospel. "There are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ," Paul remarks—and what a modern ring these words have!

It is easy to imagine why this "other gospel" had received such a good hearing by the Galatians. It was more accommodating, more palatable, more understandable, and more conveniently "fitted in" to their existing pattern of life. The man who preaches that kind of gospel will always get a hearing. And Paul's words will always stand as a solemn rebuke to that man. "If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed."

### Easily-Classified Christ

Is anyone preaching that kind of gospel today? Nothing is surer. This "other gospel" is being insidiously preached in our age by many who profess to minister in Christ's name. This, of course, is the temptation which pastor and people have to face in every generation—the temptation to compromise the truth, to preach or to practice a diluted form of Christianity, to lower one's standards in the interests of popularity or easy living. And so this is really a letter to *us*. "Beware," Paul cries, "of a watered-down religion. . . . Beware of this 'other gospel' to which men so readily give their allegiance! . . . Beware of this message which is competing so strenuously with the 'real thing'!"

What, then, are some of the modern caricatures of the gospel of which we should beware?

How men love to fit Christ into their existing pattern of life instead of realizing that he is bigger than all their measuring tapes and greater than their man-made notions! Think of how much modern thought resents the very idea of a uniq Savior, One who defies their every attempt "classify" him! Yet this is the Christ of whom t Bible speaks and the only Christ whom we m rightly preach. It has been told that Napoleon w once talking to a group of skeptics who dismiss Christ as a great man, but nothing more. Quiet he replied: "Gentlemen, I know men, and Jes Christ was more than a man." How many of o generation accept that judgment?

### Uniqueness

There can be little doubt that men's resistan to the idea of Christ's uniqueness was part of th reason why the Jewish leaders rejected him. Fro infancy every Jew had been taught what kind Messiah to expect. His characteristics were co mon knowledge; it is hardly surprising that, whe Christ did come in the flesh, he was hailed as *th* Messiah who had become stereotyped in the mind of nearly every Jew in the land. He was expected t conform to type! He was to be the "easily-classifie Christ" *or* he was to be pronounced a fraud. If h had appeared as a militant conqueror and a politi cal firebrand, his contemporaries would have under stood it. But their facility for classification made i impossible for them even to begin to understand Messiah who offered to forgive his tormentors. Per haps we should not judge them too harshly, fo these are also *our* faults. We secretly want a Chris who can be readily squared with our preconceive notions. But the fact is that Christ is unique. He i unclassifiable. He "breaks out of the theologica strait jackets in which we try to encase him."

When Negley Farson was a boy he knew very little about his grandfather. In later life, however when he had occasion to record his impressions o him, he wrote: "All I knew was that he made other men around him look like mongrel dogs." Is that not a dim parable of how the genuine Christian regards his Christ? His is the gospel of the *un*-classifiable Christ, the Christ who is not merely human, but gloriously divine, the Christ who is not primarily a moralist, but a Savior: the Christ who refuses to be confined in one of our little pigeonholes, but fills the whole horizon with his outstretched arms.

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HARRY HUTCHISON, *a native of Scotland, ministered there for nine years before being called in 1957 to the pulpit of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada. Dr. Hutchison holds M.A. and B.D. degrees from Edinburgh and a Ph.D. from Glasgow. He also has a degree in music.*

Join all the glorious names
Of wisdom, love, and power,
That ever mortals knew,
That angels ever bore:
All are too mean to speak His worth,
Too mean to set my Savior forth.

This, says St. Paul, is the only gospel that is worth-while: the gospel of the unclassifiable Christ. The gospel which merely *talks* religion will always have a following. Church life can be very pleasant, and many people still think it worthwhile to maintain their "church connection," even though they hold no dynamic Christian beliefs. A little volume entitled *More Canny Tales from Aberdeen* contains this brief conversation between a clergyman and a member of his congregation. "It gives me great joy, Mrs. Brown, to see you always in your pew on the Sabbath day." To which she enthusiastically replied: "Indeed, sir, I'm real glad I come, for it's not often I get such a comfortable seat and so little to think about!"

### Well-Padded Pew

Our twentieth-century motives for coming to church may have changed somewhat, and yet most of us still acknowledge the attraction of the well-padded pew. The "sermon-tasters" comprise an alarming percentage of those who are church-connected. The comfort of their cushion still means more to many Christians than the compulsion of his cross. In 1948 a special prayer was composed for the great conference of churchmen held at Lambeth. It ran: "Almighty God, give us grace to be not only hearers but doers of thy holy Word; not only to admire but to obey thy doctrine; not only to profess but to practice thy religion; not only to live but to live thy gospel." Shall we—can we—say a cordial "Amen" to this prayer? Are we interested in a Christianity with a cross at its heart, or would we prefer what one author has called "Christianity without tears"?

There is certainly no doubt that there are today "some who trouble us and want to pervert the gospel of Christ." Even Christianity's avowed enemies who profess an atheistic creed are anxious that Christianity should exist only in a watered-down form; for then it cannot possibly be a danger to the spread of an atheism devoid of morality. The really alarming situation is, of course, that Christianity is so often *content* to be tolerated: content to exist in a perverted and discolored form. Indeed, modern Christianity is in danger of producing men and women who are desperately afraid of "getting hurt" for Christ.

Despite ourselves, Christendom is gradually becoming divided into two sections—those who feel compelled to serve, and those who are content to sit. In the light of this rather ominous situation it is profitable to recall again the story of Martin Luther and his friend who claimed to share Luther's views on faith. He too was a monk; and at length they came to this agreement, that Luther would go down into the dust and heat of battle for spiritual reformation, while his friend would stay in the monastery upholding his hands in prayer. The arrangement prevailed for a time, until Luther's friend had a dream, a dream in which he saw a huge field of corn and one solitary reaper trying to perform his heartbreaking task. The reaper was Luther. In a flash the monk saw the meaning of his dream, and cried: "I must leave my prayers and get to the work." And so he left his pious solitude and went to labor in the harvest. Would that those who have embraced the gospel of a well-padded pew had such a dream as this!

### Push-Button Religion

In every age there has been the temptation to use religion as a kind of "open sesame" to life and luxury. "How to win friends—in ten easy lessons"—there is one example of what Paul might call "another gospel"! As if religion *could* be made easy! No wonder the crowd at Calvary could not understand Christ's refusal to come down from the cross. This refusal, to them, meant only one thing, the impotence of the religion he stood for.

Men still argue like that. Indeed, many of them profess allegiance to Christ and join the local church for no other reason than their hope of an easier life and greater immunity from the wind and the storm. They are believers in magic! Of course, down the centuries men's instinctive allegiance has been to the miraculous and the spectacular. Herod "hoped to see some miracle done by him." And so do we. We want him for what he can *do* for us, instead of for what he *is* in himself—the Incarnate Lord. To many of our generation religion is either a spiritual bulldozer or it is a fraud. How many men and women in North America today are living their lives with stubborn, preconceived ideas as to what life should be like? How many encounter a "black patch" on the pattern of life and expect it to vanish just as soon as they have prayed God to erase it for them?

Is not our chief error, our chief sin, the rather presumptuous one of thinking that *we,* not God, should choose the colors for the pattern of life? An article written in a women's periodical tells of how a customer entered an art dealer's store and ordered a print of a famous painting. When she returned a few days later and saw it, she exclaimed: "Oh dear, can't you get this in other colors? This doesn't match my room." This surely is the kind of thing that Christians are constantly saying—*to God.* "Can't you get this in other colors?" and God's answer is "No." The faith which God-in-Christ offers men is not a glorified form of Aladdin's lamp; it is a faith which transforms our existing life *from within.* It offers us not escape but expansion. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Ours is not the gospel of a push-button religion, but the gospel of an all-sufficient Savior.

"If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received"—be it the gospel of an easily-classified Christ, or the gospel of a well-padded pew, or the gospel of a push-button religion—"let him be accursed!"

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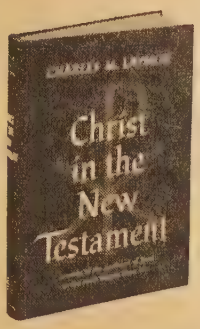


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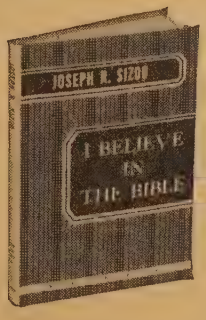


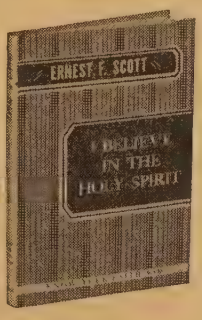


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# The Minister and His Ego

**By Clarence Kilde**

ONCE I knew a very able minister who hoped someday to preach a sermon entitled "Ministers Do the Damnedest Things." Unfortunately this dedicated man never got around to preaching it, but I think we ministers know what he meant; for a central problem of all ministers is related to the ego and the strange actions to which the ego impels them. In all charity, I do not presume to catalogue specific evidences of unfortunate actions due to supersensitivity of the ego. In any case, to relate ministers' sins other than my own would leave me more smug than I already am. It is sufficient to say that we are most commonly tempted to throw our weight around—to assert, defend, protect, coddle, nurture, parade and pander our egos. Prima donna proclivities are the perennial peril of parsons.

We display this in multitudinous ways, and in no way quite so brazenly as in our overwhelming desire to have our preaching well received. That accessory to all theological magazine racks, the *New Yorker*, frequently catches us at this point in cartoons. One such cartoon shows a veteran parson talking to a neophyte in the ministry: "Andrew, if you are interested in preferment in the ministry, stay away from two subjects in the pulpit, religion and politics."

Thus, in our obsession with self, we conform to the secular mind. We choose to be reasonable according to our environment, be it farm, city or suburb. By being tolerant to the point of indifference, we succumb to secular society and feed its desire for peace of mind rather than for the divinely provoked mind.

The most blatant example of this brand of pulpit egotism is that popular minister who permitted his publisher to market a Christmas gift package containing the Bible with the minister's own book alongside. By contrast, no church father or classic theologian of first rank ever remotely dreamed that his writings were worthy of being placed beside the Holy Scriptures.

### The Fitted Cap

Ministerial egotism also displays itself in our stubborn refusal to identify ourselves with the sins of the people. What pride we take in making pontifical pronouncements of Christian perfection from the pulpit with no apparent sympathy for the compulsions that are our congregations' problems. Whereas the first example of egotism was our desire to conform, here we delight in our failure to conform to the grubby little sins of our flocks. It is like the associate minister in the *New Yorker* cartoon who said to his superior after services, "I thought the cap fitted quite a few of them this morning."

Because we live in a complicated society in which multitudes have little or no freedom to think or act within the rigors of their daily work, it is extreme egotism to tell real-estate men to live as Jesus did when most of us own no real estate and are unaware of the pressures and compulsions these men must work under. Of course, it is easy to swing such an intellectual club over the heads of our congregations; the sanctity of the pulpit makes rebuttal impossible; but an intellectual club hurts quite as much as any other and certainly is not included among the armaments of God as listed by St. Paul.

We also reveal our parson's ego in many little ways. So many kind old ladies have praised our sermons that we are offended, irritated, sometimes angered when a colleague or friendly layman presumes to criticize our efforts. And how quickly we justify our mistakes! All too often there is the suspicion that we are not fighting Satan and his cohorts, but are creating a flurry of activity to conceal his satanic majesty's residence within our own souls. Surely, the asserting of clerical authority in all causes may be but a disguise for our festering pride.

Very well then, what shall we do about it? Being ministers, it is only natural that we should see three ste in the treatment.

### Three Points

First, we must see the inevitabil of the ego. We all have one and it nothing new:

> And they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they were silent; for on the way they had discussed with one another who was the greatest.

Thus we are ashamed to confe what we are not ashamed to do. W may not always be so foolish as talk about who is greatest among u but that does not mean we do n think about it. The best of us stru gles with that sin.

No one was more aware than Ma tin Luther that the real sin evolve from the self. There were times th Luther felt so certain of his own idea that he became furious with himsel At such moments his corrective med cine was to recite the Lord's Praye inversely: "Hallowed be *my* name, *m* will be done." This invariably shame him into a more humble attitude.

For Luther it was his deep aware ness of the sins of self-concern an self-centeredness that heightened th joy of his discovery, "Since we ar justified by faith, we have peace wit God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Thereafter, secure in the knowledg that God accepts us as we are, Luthe was emancipated from self-centere fear and frustration, so that God coul use his ego for His own divine purpose

### The Ego a Gift

This leads us to the second observa tion concerning the ego: It is fraugh with hopeful possibilities, because it i a gift of God. As ministers our basi conviction is that we have been cal to preach the good news.

To be sure, we did not choose to d this. Said Jesus to the apostles, "You did not choose me, but I chose you an appointed you." This means amon other things that the ego has validity Ego by itself and in itself is not wrong God's creativity is infinite; therefore

---

CLARENCE KILDE, *a graduate of St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, and Union Theological Seminary, New York, was ordained into the ministry of the Congregational Church at Pilgrim Church, Minneapolis, in 1936. He served three years as chaplain in World War II, and is presently pastor of Fairmount Community Church (Congregational), Wichita, Kansas.*

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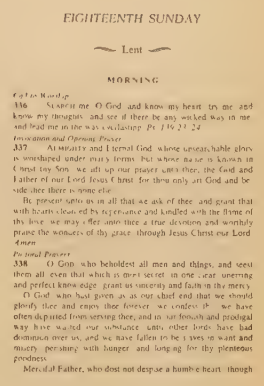
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you are important, for there never will be another you. It is just as great a sin to habitually deplore oneself as to habitually exalt oneself. So do not underestimate yourself for you are important in the eyes of God. Hence, as ministers of God we are to assert ourselves in our ministry, for it is God who has called us and not we ourselves.

In the Old Testament we have a striking picture of Ezekiel being called by God, and appointed to be sent on a mission; but Ezekiel fell down in despair at his own inadequacy and unworthiness. But God said to him, "Son of man, stand upon your feet, and I will speak with you." God cannot communicate spiritual insight and power to a soul supine, and he cannot strike sparks from a wooden soul. Ezekiel showed a proper and decent humility when he fell to the ground in despair with his unworthiness, but he did not *stay* there. We are to be initially humble but not forever humiliated. God respects our ego, and so must we. Because he accepts us we ought to accept ourselves, only then can God speak to us. "Son of man, stand upon your feet, and I will speak with you . . . I send you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels, who have rebelled against me; they and their fathers have transgressed against me to this very day. The people also are impudent and stubborn: I send you to them; and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God.' " These are the conditions of receiving our commission and the nature of that commission.

### Bankruptcy of the Self

We see the same commission in Paul's conversion. Paul needed to face the bankruptcy of the self, needed to be emptied of his own self-congratulatory ego, before God could use him for the saving of others. Not until he knew from experience that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" could he know that "the righteousness of God is revealed through faith." From the experience which culminated on the Damascus Road, Paul, a new being, began to acquire the fulfillment of the self in the conviction, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith."

Of course, God takes the risk that our ego may try to eclipse him. Thus it is our responsibility as free men to use the ego for the purposes of God. We have as our model Paul himself who preached not only the objective gospel of Christ crucified and risen again but the reality of the gospel that lay in Paul's personal appropriation of it, so that he went about speaking boldly, "according to *my* gospel." It is by this personal witness to the gospel and its power that the ego becomes an instrument in and of an ongoing ministry.

But we are free to assert the ego in this proclamation of "my gospel" only within the context of the full gospel, the second half of which is described thus by Paul: "Christ Jesus came to save sinners *of whom I am chief.*" And here we make haste to point the peril. This kind of text is one of the crucial rediscoveries of the so-called "neo-orthodox" of whom the discerning have only one worry: that precisely because we are not proud we become proud of not being proud. So our problem voiced in common parlance is simply this, "You can't win!" In and by yourself, you can't win.

For what is it that makes us as ministers inevitable sinners? It is that which makes all people sinners. A state of anxiety. This is classic Christianity from Paul, through Augustine, Pascal, Kierkeggard, Niebuhr, Tillich, declaring that anxiety is a precondition of sin.

It is *fundamental* anxiety by virtue of our creation. It is therefore a fearful thing for the creature to presume to speak for the Creator, the most high and holy God. And so we seek to escape the tension by being self-centered instead of God-centered. We seek to resolve the tension in absorption with our own ego.

This leads us to the second source of sin, namely pride. We are here still concerned, not with professional pride as such, albeit it is present, but just plain pride. And the more we pander to our pride because of the anxieties that come from the peculiar pressures of our professional life, the more insecure we become—and the more insecure we become the more we throw our own ecclesiastical weight arou

Cried the apostles, "Who then be saved?" Answered Jesus, "W men this is impossible, but with all things are possible." Cried Paul Apostle, "Wretched man that I Who will deliver me from this bod death? Thanks be to God thro Jesus Christ our Lord!"

In summary we may say the mi ter's ego is both his peril and his h it packs the possibility of his und and his salvation. Because ego is of God's creation we cannot get ri it, but being a gift of God the ego be used of God for his purposes. S dedication of the self is possible with God's help. No one knew better than a dedicated layman by name of Oliver Cromwell who prayed somewhat like this, "T seest how stubborn we are to do own will, grant us the guidance grace to will to do thy will."

For the minister—in his need in his potentiality—the final word from the Apostle Paul, "For what preach is not ourselves, but Je Christ as Lord."


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# Book Reviews

YOU LOOKING FOR GOD? *By Edund A. Steimle. Muhlenberg. $2.25.*

a preacher I dislike reading sermons. The creations of other chers ought to be my bread and t, but long ago I discovered that t of us in the ministry cannot comicate in two media—through the en *and* the written word. Usually, better we are in the area of public king, the poorer is our effort when omes to putting it down on paper. n, after reading a sermon, I give man the benefit of the doubt by ng, "Well, whatever it was that le this sermon go over at eleven ock on Sunday morning when it first preached, certainly is not e now!"

ll of us recognize that many a ser- with poor content comes alive n a warm personality, with a lot of usiasm and with the right inflecs and gestures begins delivering it. course the stained-glass windows the organ and the expectancy all . Without these props, most ser- s are dull indeed.

But not the seventeen sermons in volume by the Hagan Professor of ctical Theology at the Lutheran ological Seminary in Philadelphia. radio and television popularity at- to his ability to communicate the ken word. This excellent volume at- s to his ability to communicate the tten word. The content is stimulat- and fresh and the style is suited to subject matter. The thought flows ng smoothly and when you finish h sermon, you say quietly and sin- ely, "I want to be a better man."—*sley Cunningham Moore, Sixth ited Presbyterian, Pittsburgh, Pa.*

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND MODERN MAN. *By H. G. G. Herklots. Essential Books. $2.75.*

HERE is grist for any preacher's homiletic mill and/or a good text an adult class or discussion group. e author, vicar of Doncaster, Engd, writes out of a conviction that isobedience to all and every one of Commandments depersonalizes an and his society; making them less an the man and the society they were tended to be."

Each chapter is introduced by a page more of related Scriptures from both d and New Testaments. Each comandment is interpreted in light of the ebrew experience and then of such sights as may be derived from the ew Testament. "A Christian comentator on the Ten Commandments ust constantly look from them to the ne whose coming not only fulfilled e Law and the Prophets but also released the power which was needed for the achievement of the Law's ideals." Without referring to them, the author carefully follows the "Guiding Principles for the Interpretation of the Bible" accepted by the Ecumenical Study Conference at Wadham College in 1949.

The book does a good job of pointing up the implications of the Ten Commandments for modern man. For example, the discussion of the fifth considers the place of older people in a mobile, apartment-dwelling society; the sixth raises issues of war, capital punishment, and suicide; the eighth, the exploitation of colonial peoples and cheating on tax returns; the ninth, the prostitution of the press and other mass media and propaganda of hatred against other nations.

Yet the author makes clear that all the commandments are grounded in the first and second. "The Decalogue is hardly a code of behavior for atheists, nor even for agnostics." It presupposes faith in and loyalty to the living God. Moreover, "belief in God does not remain an effective force when it is only propagated because it is good for morale."

The only regrettable thing is that the proofreaders did not catch the numerous misspellings, mispunctuations, and other minor errors which mar the book.—*Harold L. Lunger, Brite College of the Bible, Fort Worth, Texas.*

INTERCESSORY PRAYER. *By Edward W. Bauman. Westminster. $2.00.*

SOME books are destined to provide inspiration and help over a long period of time for a great many people. Such a book is Leslie D. Weatherhead's *The Will of God.* This book has that kind of a future. It is brief; it goes straight to the point; it is written in language easily understood. It indicates the paths around the problems which seem to block progress. It challenges the reader to move ahead from the known into the unknown. In short, it is an exciting book!

"Can we believe that our prayers for others are heard and answered?" For many this is the most difficult question of all about prayer. Because of their doubts, many people have ceased to give prayers of intercession the central place they once occupied in religious observance. Referring to Monica's prayer for her son, Augustine, Dr. Bauman asks whether we can believe in the effectiveness of such a prayer as readily in the 20th century as in the 5th. Considering successively the objections of science, psychology and theology, he suggests that a deeper understanding of what these disciplines are really saying not only makes valid intercessory prayer but points up its creative value. If we believe that the God revealed in Christ is Lord of creation, then intercessory prayer is not only justified, it is required.

This book deserves and will doubtless get the praise of frequent borrowing for homiletical purposes. It is a book that can be given to an inquiring layman with confidence that he can understand what is written and will be helped to explore the exciting further ranges of Christian prayer.—*James Gordon Gilkey, Jr., Bethany Union, Chicago, Illinois.*

DANGEROUS FATHERS, PROBLEM MOTHERS, AND TERRIBLE TEENS. *By Carlyle Marney. Abingdon. $2.00.*

THIS book contains some thirty-four talks, or short chapters, on family life. Special emphasis is given to the relationship between parents and children.

One should not expect to find a catalog of techniques for running a home or a scientific analysis of the family situation. The author does not approach the subject as an "expert" on the family. He is a minister speaking about simple truths of which we all need to be reminded. One could almost say that these chapters are meditations on family life.

*Dangerous Fathers, Problem Mothers, and Terrible Teens* is probably a good title because on page after page the reader is told what parenthood ought not to be. The reader may feel that there ought to be a more positive approach—in one section particularly he may want to ask, "Is motherhood really this bad?"

In other parts, of course, the book is constructive. Any mother or father, baffled by an "impossible" teen-ager, would gain understanding and hope after reading the chapter, "The Gulf Between."

Here and there statements are made that cause the eyebrows to be raised. For example, on page 48 one reads, " 'the silent kind' . . . is a very dangerous father." The paragraphs that follow concerning the uncommunicative father are good reading. But the question remains: Are all of the "silent kind" of men necessarily dangerous fathers? Some questions would be raised also concerning what makes the "snooping mother."

If you can overlook some rather authoritative statements and do not mind being "preached at," you will find some good reading in this book.—*Gary Bousman, Plymouth Congregational, Fargo, North Dakota.*

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# PULPIT POST

*(Continued from page 2)*

author is the complete needlessness of the barbaric action. Also, by-passed, the repetition of it, at Nagasaki.

The destruction of Dresden and of the Japanese cities was not an act of war. In both cases the issue of war had been determined. It was wanton, inhuman barbarism. Indeed, the Japanese government had tried to surrender and had been refused by President Roosevelt, after conference with the insidious powers deriving from Russia. The Huns and Vandals wrought much less wanton destruction than —wholly needlessly—the twen century Americans.

JOHN F. C. GREE
McKeesport, Pa.

**Criticism—Subtle**

SIR: After reading the sermon recent issues of the Pulpit, I am m to remind our contemporary preac (as well as to remind myself!) Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick first back in 1928:

> Every problem that the preach faces leads back to one basic que tion: how well does he understa the thoughts and lives of his pe ple? That he should know H gospel goes without saying, b he may know it ever so well a yet fail to get it within reachi distance of anybody unless he i timately understands people a cares more than he cares for an thing else what is happening i side of them. Preaching wrestling with individuals ov questions of life and death, a until that idea of it commands preacher's mind and method, el quence will avail him little a theology not at all.

HAROLD W. RUOP
Minister-at-large
The Minnesota Council of Chur

**Not So Subtle**

SIR: I have always been hesit about offering criticism, and do so in friendly spirit. In comparing Pulpit of today with that of, say 1 I notice quite a difference. Sev years ago, your magazine was m better. You carried several arti then you do not carry now, such "Bulletin Board," "Emurian," "I slin." These articles had a wide ra of appeal. I enjoyed the way you p sented book reviews then better t now.

May I suggest that you compare 1953 or 1954 series with the pres ones. I think you will notice a diff ence too.

J. CHALMES HOLMES
First Baptist Church
Cochran, Georgia

**We Agree, Of Course!**

SIR: I read your Memo—"Lett we like . . ."—and my eye fell to t biographical data, "David A. M Lennan left the faculty of Yale Div ity School in 1955 to return to t ministry as pastor of Brick Presby rian Church in Rochester, New Yor As an "ecclesiastical grease monke who is often irked by the loose us terminology so that *pastorate* is oft confused with *ministry* I turned to m typewriter. Really now, neither y [TAG] nor I—Presbyterians both believe Yale is so "un-Presbyteria that MacLennan's faculty membersh put him outside the pale of the mini try! All of which is a facetious way

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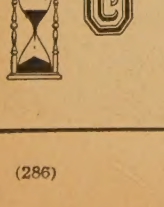


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for sufficient grace for "pen s" etc. to be looked upon as still "the ministry."

HERMAN M. GROSS.
stant Executive Secretary
sbytery of St. Louis

**Really Is Hard!**

: I want to apologize to Dr. ger. Your April table of contents illed his article as a "Sermon," *ot* under the listing, "Articles." efore thought this was supposed an example of "sermons that are ly being preached today." If it d properly have been listed as an e, my objections to its lack of tyle are gone.

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## Pulpit Calendar

Sept. 1—Labor Day.
Sept. 7—15th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 14—16th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 21—17th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 28—18th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 28-Oct. 5—Christian Education Week.
Oct. 5—World-Wide Communion.
Oct. 12—Men and Missions Day.
Oct. 12-19—Churchmen's Week.
Oct. 19—Laymen's Sunday. World Order Sunday.
Oct. 26—Reformation Sunday. World Temperance Day.
Oct. 31—Reformation Day.
Nov. 1—All Saints' Day.
Nov. 2—All Souls' Day.
Nov. 7—World Community Day.
Nov. 9—Stewardship Day.
Nov. 16—25th Sunday after Pentecost.
Nov. 23—Thanksgiving Sunday.
Nov. 27—Thanksgiving Day.
Nov. 30—1st Sunday in Advent.


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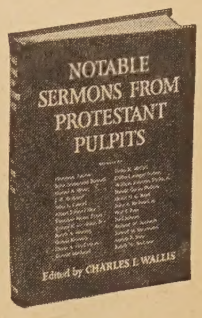


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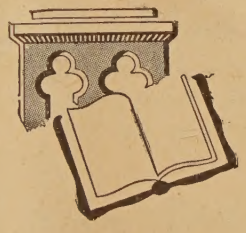

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